

The Lesser
Writings
of Samuel Hahnemann



Collected and Translated by
R.E. DUDGEON, MD

THE

LESSER WRITINGS

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN.

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED

BY

R. E. DUDGEON, M.D.

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE HOMOEOPATHIC THEORY AND PRACTICE."



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AMERICAN PREFACE.

IN presenting to the American public, at a very moderate price, a reprint of Hahnemann's Lesser Writings, the Publisher has been actuated by an earnest desire to make generally known to laymen, as well as to medical men, the vast knowledge, the genius, and the genuine philanthropy of the illustrious founder of Homœopathy. The present volume, comprising as it does, many clearly expressed articles of general interest to all classes, commends itself to the attention of all who feel a true interest in the advancement of the healing art.

On rising from the perusal of almost any portion of these pages, the reader will not fail to be impressed with the noble benevolence, as well as the natural and acquired talents of Hahnemann.

Commencing, as the volume does, with papers which were written while our author still belonged to the Old School, and at a period several years previous to the discovery of the homœopathic principle of cure, we are enabled to appreciate in the fullest manner his greatness even as an allopathic writer.

The most intelligent critics of all schools who are familiar with his literary works, entertain the opinion that he was one of the most profound thinkers, and one of the most learned and intelligent writers of his day, even when he is judged by those productions which have no special bearing upon Homœopathy. His descriptions of disease, his thorough knowledge of ancient languages, and of the medical literature of the past, his wonderful powers of observation, his critical acumen, and above all, his acknowledged benevolence and integrity, would have secured for him a position among the great men of his century under any circumstances. But as a reformer of the opinions and practices of a class of men whose influence has remained pre-eminent for more than two thousand years, he has met with the most violent and determined opposition from the commencement to the termination of his career. His *earlier* essays, however, published in

Hufeland's Journal, and in pamphlet form, attracted universal admiration from all sources, for their great originality, comprehensiveness, and justice. Eminent among his cotemporaries as a classical scholar, and for his profound knowledge of the lore of the ancients, his translations from the Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and English, were looked upon as *beau ideals* of what such works should be, and were appreciated and used accordingly.

No sooner, however, had he announced a doctrine of cure which clashed with the stereotyped dogmas of his brethren, and which threatened to impair their pecuniary interests, than, a system of opposition and persecution of the most dishonourable character was instituted by both physicians and apothecaries. Not content with circulating bitter denunciations, and the most unfounded calumnies with respect to Hahnemann and his doctrines, they appealed to several European governments for legislative enactments, which should repress their promulgation and practice, in order that they might still continue to dictate to the public what should be their medical faith.

For a time, this arbitrary course was partially successful, and victims were drugged as usual with poisons, to swell the coffers of the doctors and druggists; but gradually honest minds were directed to the subject, and notwithstanding the almost certain risk of losing caste with their friends, and of sacrificing, to a greater or less extent, their general influence and their business interests, nearly all who had the candour to *investigate*, became convinced of the truth of the homœopathic theory and had the moral courage to adopt it in practice. As time has rolled on, the system has continued steadily to extend, always among the most intelligent classes, until at the present time, every civilized nation on the earth hails it as the most important discovery, and the greatest blessing to suffering humanity of modern times.

All must concede that but few medical writers have appeared since the days of Hippocrates, whose opinions have stood the test of half a century so triumphantly as those of our author. In a subject so extensive and difficult as that of the healing art, it is of course impossible for any single man, however exalted his genius and talents, to arrive at absolute perfection, or to remain entirely free from errors; but in the instance of Hahnemann, we might almost claim an exception to the rule, were it not for two or three minor, and really unimportant matters of opinion which are of but little importance in a

practical point of view. His great law of cure *similia similibus curantur*, stands forth before the world, and will ever continue to stand, an immutable and glorious truth.

His doctrine of applying remedies which operate specifically upon *diseased parts alone*, rather than upon those which are *healthy*, must ever commend itself to the sound judgment of all thinking men.

In like manner, the discovery that the subdivision of crude substances, and the diffusion of their atoms through an inert vehicle, developed in them new and previously unappreciated curative powers, when properly administered, is in itself sufficiently important to immortalize its author.

So also, the introduction into medicine, of drug-provings for the purpose of ascertaining the pure specific action of each article upon the healthy organism and thus of enabling the practitioner to apply his remedies in disease knowingly and efficiently, is another feature in modern medical science which has already commanded the attention and admiration of the whole scientific world.

But while we claim for Hahnemann so exalted a position among the good, the wise, and the great benefactors of modern times, we are not so devoid of common sense as to claim for him *infallibility*. The wisest and best men of all ages, have had their faults and their errors, and it would be folly on the part of the homœopath, to attribute to the discoverer of *similia*, absolute perfection in every thing pertaining to the theory and practice of medicine. By so doing we should follow in the footsteps of the allopathists who for so many centuries have adopted the views and practice of Hippocrates, without question and without comment. Hahnemann has laid the foundation of the true healing art on a firm and incontrovertible basis.—The great fundamental principles to which we have already alluded, have been thoroughly tested for more than half a century, with the most gratifying results; and it is now very generally conceded by impartial observers who have investigated the subject, that upon these principles alone can a rational system of medicine be founded.

But if this solid and glorious foundation has been laid for us, let it not be supposed that the edifice is complete, and that nothing more remains to be accomplished. Let it not be supposed, that with the death of the venerated Hahnemann, the genius of Homœopathy perished also; but let us give a just mœed of praise to the many noble spirits who by their labours have contributed so much towards the

vancement of our art. We need only mention the names of JAHR, RAU, BENNINGHAUSEN, NOACK, TRINKS, HERING, HENDERSON, HARTMANN, STAFF, GROSS, and RUCKERT, to call forth a cordial response to our sentiments. Our School at the present time, contains a large number of gentlemen of the highest order of talent, who are labouring assiduously to perfect the system in all its details, and it becomes us as seekers after truth, to avail ourselves of their experience and industry. We are aware that there is a limited number of intolerant and contracted persons, who would gladly repress all further original thought, and stifle all future investigations upon the subject of Homœopathy. Bigoted, weak of intellect, and incapable of generating an original idea themselves, they have the presumption to set up a doctrine of infallibility, for the present as well as for all future generations, perfect in all respects, and ever to be blindly worshipped. Forgetting the old maxim that "to err, is human, but that perfection belongs only to God," they would inculcate a fixed standard of belief and practice for all coming time, regardless of all new discoveries and improvements. Such men are a curse to any system, and were the great Master himself living,—he who passed his whole life in patiently seeking after new facts, in order to modify and correct his erroneous ideas upon medical subjects—he would be the first to condemn such an illiberal policy. The author of Homœopathy, throughout the whole of his glorious career, was remarkable as a man of facts. Without a particle of bigotry or prejudice in his composition, and possessing no special reverence for the heathen dogmas which had been handed down from generation to generation, his aim was *truth* alone, to arrive at which, his efforts were untiring, as the manifold facts he has put upon record amply prove. May all of his disciples follow in his footsteps, and by exercising the same industry, the same liberality, and the same devotion to science, seek to advance Homœopathy to that state of perfection which it must eventually attain.

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INSTRUCTION FOR SURGEONS
RESPECTING
VENEREAL DISEASES,
TOGETHER WITH
A NEW MERCURIAL PREPARATION.
BY SAMUEL HAHNEMANN, DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.
FIRST PUBLISHED AT LEIPZIG, IN 1789.

P R E F A C E .

My intention in this book is to make the medical public familiar with a wholesome theory and an improved treatment of the diseases herein spoken of.

Hunter, Schwediauer, Hecker, André, Simmons, Peyrilhe, Falk, and some other, known and anonymous, older and more recent authors have assisted me, partly by supplying me with what I did not know, partly by enabling me to arrange my matter. I have made grateful mention of their names or books.

I therefore trust my labour is not superfluous, for to the construction of a building belong not only beams and pillars, but also partition walls and buttresses; not only stone blocks, but small stones to fill up the intervening spaces; and well is it if they fit.

It is in every way a ticklish undertaking to propose a new remedy, or to bring again into notice a neglected or little known one. The person who attempts this must either be a man of high repute, or be entirely free from any suspicion of mean objects.

Although destitute of the former, I am quite at ease respecting the latter. I give an accurate account of the mode of preparing an excellent remedy. Any one who has been in the habit of preparing other chemical drugs, can unhesitatingly prepare this one, assured of the result; I conceal no step, no manipulation in the process. The excellence of the remedy is obvious from the very nature of the thing, and is further proved by the observations of myself and my friends, who have seen similar advantage from its employment. Any one who knows a better, is at perfect liberty to make it known and give it the preference to mine.

When I call it mine, I only mean thereby to say, that I show a purer and more certain mode of preparing it than my predecessors, and give more definite instruction regarding the precautions to be attended to in its use and its mode of action, and not that no one has ever thought of employing anything similar.

A precipitated mercury, very similar to the "soluble mercury," (*præcipitatum mercurii carnei coloris, qui ex solutione mercurii vivi in aqua forti paratur, affuso volatili urinæ spiritu*) was first used internally with the best effects in syphilis, 1693, by Gervaise Uçay, made into pills with equal parts of oxydised mercury and some honey—the dose, two or three grains several times a day. I refer the reader to his *Traité de la maladie vénérienne*, Toulouse, 1693, chap. 9, though the preparation could not have been entirely free from turbith and white precipitate.

This excellent remedy, however, subsequently fell into complete neglect, until in recent times the progress of chemistry suggested similar mercurial preparations; but we can hardly say that their employment was ever greatly in vogue, with the exception perhaps of Black's *pulvis cinereus*. Prepossession in favour of what was old, although less efficacious or even prejudicial, combined with no small prejudice¹ against all that could be called new and untried in mercurial preparations or other remedies for venereal affections, induced practitioners not to give the latter a trial, but rather to stick to their calomel, sublimate, and Neapolitan ointment.

And yet the more recent pharmacopœias furnish us with remedies which bear a striking resemblance to mine, and may have occasionally been used.

Such a preparation is the mercury precipitated from nitric acid by ammonia, *pulvis mercurii cinereus*, E., *turpethum album*, O., *mercurius præcipitatus dulcis*, O., as also the *turpethum nigrum* or *mercurius præcipitatus niger*, precipitated by ammonia in vapour from the same acid. I long made my preparation in the latter way, until I corrected its imperfections by the changes mentioned below.

Dr. Black is said to be the inventor² of the *pulvis mercurii cinereus*, which he directs to be made in the following way. "Take equal parts of weak nitric acid and mercury, mix together and let the mercury dissolve, dilute it with pure water, add ammonia until the mercury is completely separated, wash the powder with pure water and dry it."

I may here allude to the *mercurius præcip. fuscus Wuerzii*, a pre-

¹ The many disappointed hopes respecting the more recent specifics for syphilis, which their quackish vendors announced with the most exaggerated recommendations, and kept secret to the great advantage of their pockets, have served to render practical physicians very shy of such remedies. They did not observe any of the boasted effects of these costly nostrums, but often the injurious results from their use; and the discovery of their composition often revealed some mercurial preparation that had long been known.

² Gervaise Uçay, as I have shewn above, prepared it long before him for the same object.

precipitate from nitric acid by potash, merely because it bears some resemblance to mine.

All the authors of the remedies I have named sought to obtain a pure oxyde of mercury free from corrosive acids, especially from sulphuric and muriatic acids, and from the disadvantages of the white precipitate and turbith; let us see if they attained their object.

The purest saltpetre is never used for the preparation of nitric acid; it is always adulterated with earthly muriates or neutral salts. Even the most purified is not free from these. When mercury is dissolved in this, heat is usually applied by means of a sand-bath, in order to hasten the solution. The liquid is at first clouded white but soon afterwards all becomes clear, that is to say the white precipitate at first formed is redissolved and retained in solution in the acid in such a way that even dilution with water cannot precipitate it, and this can only be done by an alkaline solution. If the mercury be now precipitated from this solution by any alkali, the liberated white precipitate falls at the same time, and the precipitate is thus adulterated by no small quantity of a very poisonous medicine.

If we take any one of the mercurial preparations I have named, put it into a medicinal bottle of considerable size, and place this in a sand-bath in such a way that it lies almost inverted, but so that the powder rests upon the side; the neck of the bottle being completely buried in the hot sand, and the bulging out part of the bottle wherein the powder lies completely surrounded by the sand. If heat be now gradually applied, a white deposit will take place in the uppermost part of the glass, composed partly of corrosive sublimate, partly of calomel, these being the two preparations into which the white precipitate is resolved by sublimation. The weight of both together will indicate the quantity of white precipitate contained in the mercurial preparation, and every one can easily convince himself of the truth of my assertion. If we employed purified and redistilled nitric acid for its preparation, we should certainly be much more sure of the result, but greatly increase the price of the substance. But even this will not suffice to free it from sulphuric acid.

But as the ordinary nitric acid is procured by the action of ordinary vitriol on nitre, it has frequently an admixture of sulphuric acid. It must first be rectified over fresh nitre, before we attempt to purify it by redistillation, and this will increase still more the value of the dissolvent. Who could trust to avaricious apothecaries paying attention to all these particulars?

I now pass on to the precipitating agent, and it is a matter of indifference which of them be used, (whether volatile or fixed alkali or alkaline earths), provided only it be pure.

Common chalk, marble, oyster-shells furnish, when calcined and

dissolved so as to form lime-water, a very good precipitant in many cases but I may here observe that all are products of the sea, consequently, as experiment likewise demonstrates, not free from muriatic acid.

Ordinary fixed alkali is usually obtained from potashes, which in many cases contain an admixture of sulphuric acid, (often designedly added to it for the sake of adulteration) but chiefly of magnesia, and also ordinary kitchen salt. The water usually employed for its purification contributes not a little to this impurity.

The potash prepared from tartar would be much more serviceable for the purpose, if it were prepared by burning pure crude tartar and extracting the salt therefrom by means of distilled water; but even this has the disadvantage of containing too much carbonic acid, and when, in a watery solution, it should precipitate the mercurial oxyde from the nitric acid, it redissolves the greater part of it again.

The carbonate of ammonia and ordinary spirits of hartshorn possess the same disadvantages, from their excess of carbonic acid. But caustic ammonia and that distilled with alcohol have not this fault, but both of them, as well as the dry carbonate of ammonia and the ordinary fluid spirit of hartshorn, contain no small proportion of muriatic acid; as we may perceive, by saturating them with acetic acid and adding nitrate or sulphate of silver, when the chloride of silver is precipitated.

It is not indifferent what water we employ for the necessary dilution. Well water almost always contains a proportion of muriatic acid and will not do for this purpose. Many spring-waters also are not free from it.

It is well known that much depends on the purity of the mercury, which is frequently adulterated with lead and bismuth. A mere distillation of the suspected metal will not suffice; much of the mixed metals would pass over along with it. Still less will the mere mechanical purification by squeezing it through leather suffice; a certain proportion of bismuth liquifies the lead in the mercury so much, that it will also pass through the pores of the leather. A much better plan is to get the metal by the reduction of cinnabar, especially that in the massive form, which may be mingled with potash, lime, or iron filings, and the metallic mercury obtained therefrom by distillation.

If a saturated solution of the mercury of commerce in nitric acid, diluted with equal parts of water, be boiled for half an hour with twice as much suspected mercury as there is in the solution, the mercury will lose all traces of foreign metals and be as pure as that obtained by reducing cinnabar.

Preparation of the Soluble Mercury.

Mercury purified in the latter manner I placed in a deep cellar,¹ and poured upon it as much nitric acid of an inferior kind (distilled with alumina or otherwise) as was necessary for its dissolution, and stirred this several times a day, for the heaviest portion of the solution floats closely above the mercury and soon puts a stop to its further dissolution unless we adopt this manipulation.

After the lapse of eight days we may be certain of the saturation of the acid, though there should always remain some undissolved mercury at the bottom.

This solution should now be decanted off from the sediment, evaporated and crystallized; the crystals are to be taken out, the fluid shaken off them, and after being dried upon blotting paper they are to be dissolved in as small a quantity of pure alcohol as possible. By this means they will be completely freed from all admixture of turbith and white precipitate. The solution must now be filtered, and it will then be serviceable for use.

The precipitating agent is prepared in the following way: carefully washed eggshells are exposed to a red heat for a quarter of an hour; they are then slaked like quick-lime, with distilled water, and the resulting powder is put into a well stopped bottle.

When we wish to prepare the soluble mercury, we take a pound of the fine slaked lime prepared from the eggshells, and mix it in a large new cask with 600 pounds of distilled water, heated to 100° or 150°, stirring well for some minutes till we are assured of the most perfect solution.

After allowing it to remain at rest for a quarter of an hour, by means of a tap two inches from the bottom of the cask, we draw off the pure and clear lime-water (if it be thought necessary through an outstretched woollen cloth of close texture) into a similar cask of equal dimensions, which must either be new or only used for this purpose, and which must be very even and smooth inside.

Into this clear lime-water we pour without delay, and stirring continuously, a quantity of the above mercurial solution, containing two pounds of the metal.

The black liquid soon settles, we then draw off the clear water, wash out the heavy black sediment with distilled water into glass jars, allow it to settle for twenty-four hours, pour off the water, mix up the sediment with as much fresh distilled water as we have poured off, let it again settle completely, decant the water, place the glasses in a large pot, (filling up the intervals betwixt them with ashes or sand)

¹ If the cold was intense (in winter), I let the solution take place at a temperature of 40° Fabr.

and put it in an oven just warm (200°) until the deposit is completely dry. This may be more quickly effected by spreading it out on white paper and heating it gradually on tin pans over a moderate charcoal fire, taking care not to singe the paper.

This dark greyish-black powder is the *soluble mercury*¹; which name I give it because it is completely dissolved in all animal and vegetable acids, and in water impregnated with carbonic acid; also in the gastric juice with great speed, as every practitioner may observe from the rapidity with which it causes the mercurial fever.

Lockowiz, near Dresden,

29th September, 1788.

Just as I had laid down my pen and was about to send my book to press, Girtanner's work (*Treatise on the Venereal disease*, by Christopher Girtanner, Göttingen, 1788) reached me and gave me great pleasure. He has well thought over his plan and his subject. I was glad to observe that he adopts Hamilton's excellent treatment of gonorrhœa in its essentials, and shews up the ordinary irrational mode in its true colours; that he combats the *à priori* dread of an obstruction after such a rapid suppression of the discharge, and denies the possibility of a metastasis of the gonorrhœal matter in sympathetic chemosis; he gives the distinctive signs of the various secondary gonorrhœas, shews where the venereal differs from other leucorrhœas, and the scrofulous from the venereal glandular swellings, and gives very useful instructions for preventing the suppuration of the latter. I was rejoiced to find that he perceives that the antivenereal metal can only destroy the venereal poison by a previous alteration in it, produced by the reactive powers of the animal digestive and assimilative functions; that is to say, not by mere contact or chemical affinity. I was pleased to observe that he is deeply impressed with the hurtful character of corrosive sublimate, a poison which has been so imprudently deified: that he strongly recommends the strengthening plan before, during and after the mercurial treatment, and generally rejects the French debilitating system, and that he convincingly exposes the harm of all excessive evacuations during the mercurial treatment. I was delighted to see that he unmasks so beautifully the absurdity of talking about "masked" venereal diseases, and shews up the worthlessness of preservative remedies against infection. I was glad to find that he refutes the assertion relative to the innoculation of the child by the semen and in the uterus, as also by the nurse's milk, and advises

¹[For an improvement on the above mode of preparing the *Soluble Mercury*, see Postscript to the Venereal Diseases. This complicated preparation was afterwards superseded in homœopathic practice by the *mercurius vivus*. See *Reine Arzneimittellehre*, 3d edit., vol. i.]

the treatment of even children with the antisyphilitic metal—all maxims which are of the utmost importance for the weal of humanity.

How often have I wished for the concurrence of some physician of eminence on these very points! I always hoped to obtain it, believing that observations conducted by really practical minds must eventually unite in truth, as the radii of a circle though ever so far asunder at the circumference, all converge in a common centre.

What else I deemed it expedient to extract from Girtanner, as it was no longer possible to incorporate it with the text, I have subjoined in the form of notes.

14th October, 1788.

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Second Class.

IDIOPATHIC LOCAL VENEREAL AFFECTIONS ON PARTS OF THE BODY
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FIRST DIVISION.

CHANCRE.

CHAPTER I.

CHANCRE IN GENERAL AND ESPECIALLY THAT IN MALES.

257. The venereal infection is most readily communicated to surfaces of the body that are destitute of epidermis; hence the much greater frequency of gonorrhœa than all the other venereal symptoms. Next in point of frequency are the affections that occur on parts of the body provided with a delicate epidermis; in the latter case there occur ulcers which are termed *chancres*. The thinner the epidermis the more easily does the infection take place and the more does the chancre thus produced extend.

258. The most usual seat of the venereal infection is the genital organs; hence chancre in the male generally makes its appearance in the fossa where the glans unite with the prepuce, especially on either side of the insertion of the frenum, next in point of frequency on the internal surface of the prepuce and its border, on the glans, and sometimes on the external surface of the genitals, *e. g.* on the scrotum.

259. Should the lips of the mouth, the nipple, or a wound on any other part of the body be touched with this virus, chancre will be the result in either sex.

260. A small dark-red elevated spot appears, in some cases thirty-six hours, rarely several days after the impure coitus, and with painful itching it forms a hard, inflamed pimple filled with pus, that rapidly develops itself into an ulcer. When the chancre first appears it is raised above the surface of the skin; but its hard, light-red (or dirty yellowish-white) base is a little sunk below the suety whitish borders whose periphery is inflamed and indurated, but very defined. When touched the patient experiences severe pains, and we can feel that the hardness of the whole ulcer extends very deep. The matter that exudes is of a greenish yellow colour. Such is the chancre, which gradually increases in superficial extent and depth, accompanied by pains more of a gnawing than shooting character.

261. Those chancres that have their seat in the inner surface of the prepuce are much more painful and inflamed, and generally larger than those that occur on other parts; the induration in and surrounding these chancres is more perceptible and more considerable than when they occur on the glans.

262. At the junction of the prepuce with the glans they are at first

often no bigger than millet seeds ; their most frequent seat is on either side of the frenum, where they readily eat around them and rapidly destroy this part.

263. Chancres on the glans are rare ; the inflammation, pain and hardness of the small abscess is not so great as in those on other parts ; their borders do not usually project like those on the prepuce for example, but the whole ulcer is as it were excavated in the body of the glans.

264. More painful and more inflamed are the chancres occurring on those parts of the genitals covered with a thicker epidermis, on the penis, or on the anterior part of the scrotum. In these situations they appear in the form of pimples that become covered with a slough, on the falling off of which a larger one is produced. The same is the case with chancres produced by the inoculation of the virus in wounds or parts covered by a firm epidermis.¹

265. All chancres on a given spot would probably always present the same phenomena,² as the inoculating virus is perhaps of only one and the same nature, and seldom milder or more malignant in itself, if the various corporeal constitutions did not themselves cause those great varieties in the malignancy of the chancre (gonorrhœa, buboes, &c.), by the numerous modifications of their reaction.

266. It follows from this, as experience also teaches, that to treat these idiopathic venereal ulcers with the greatest success, we should pay particular attention to the peculiar constitution of the body in every case, which with proper attention we can soon learn from the course of the chancre and its accompanying symptoms.

267. In a diathesis that has a more than ordinary tendency to inflammation, the chancre will inflame to a considerable extent round about, and acquire great depth ; the reverse will happen in cases of an opposite character. In a system peculiarly liable to irritability, the chancre will cause great pains, will have a blackish and discoloured appearance, and excrete a thin ichor.

268. The earlier the chancre begins to form sloughs, the greater is the tendency to sphacelus,³ whereby the whole penis is often lost. We may apprehend great hæmorrhage in such ulcers, when they erode the parts about them much.

¹ The inoculation with chancre virus on parts covered by a thick epidermis (by means of wounds in the arms, thighs, &c.) produces more painful and serious symptoms (inflammation, swelling, violent pains) than in the glans, lips, prepuce, &c.

² André observes that the worst chancres affect in a very mild degree those persons who are only liable to the mildest infections, and that the interval betwixt the infection and appearance of the chancre is of the same length in most persons who have been several times inoculated with very different viruses.

³ The inflammation of the chancre is usually of an erysipelatous character, hence the great tendency to sphacelus, as Girtanner has also observed.

269. In general the chancre appears later than the gonorrhœa from the same infection (perhaps they often are primarily caused by the gonorrhœal discharge remaining on those parts), and its virus may therefore be frequently removed by merely wiping the part or washing it with lime-water; they also appear more rarely, for we may reckon that gonorrhœas occur four times as often as chancres. They occur more rapidly on the prepuce; still more rapidly betwixt the junction of the prepuce and glands, especially at the frenum; most slowly on the other parts, probably because the epidermis is thicker.

270. The earlier a chancre breaks out after infection, the more is it disposed to inflammation; the later it appears, the more readily will the blood be inoculated by the poison, and lues venerea produced.

271. There are but few diseases of the body that have not been occasionally overcome by the efforts of nature. Chancre and lues venerea are to be reckoned amongst those few. If circumstances do not occur to produce the absorption of the virus out of the ulcers into the general mass of the circulating fluids (whereon buboes and lues venerea, diseases of still greater gravity than chancre, ensue), they may remain in the same place for several years without the least change, except perhaps growing somewhat larger.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE ORDINARY TREATMENT OF SIMPLE CHANCRE.

272. It is generally asserted that next to inveterate syphilis that has fastened on periosteum, ligaments and tendons, no venereal affection is more hard to cure than a chancre of considerable size and depth. The most skilful practitioners rejoice if they are able to cure a deeply rooted chancre within four to six weeks, by means of a host of external and internal medicaments, that inconvenience the patients not a little, and if they can be certain that in the course of treatment the virus has not slipped into the general mass of the circulating fluids, wandering about there undestroyed.

273. The most distinguished masters of our art are unable to promise to themselves that they will succeed in expelling it from its intrenchment in less time, assuredly not without the local employment of corrosive remedies. Without the latter, which are regarded in the light of an open assault, whilst the treatment by inunction or the internal use of the ordinary mercurial preparations is looked upon as an attack from behind, without these local corrosives, I repeat, they consider the art as impotent to eradicate this virulent ulcer.

274. How uncertain they are upon the subject, is evident from this, that some hold the local employment of mercurials as useless, whilst their opponents know besides the antivenereal metal no efficacious

topical application for chancre, but yet neither can adduce sufficient reasons based upon facts for their contradictory assertions.

275. Did the latter know that their local mercurial remedies have no effect on chancres if they be not of a corrosive nature, or at least become such in the sore, that consequently no form of mercury unprepared in the general circulation is capable of eradicating the venereal virus; and were the former aware that their non-mercurial sceptics, equally with their mercurial caustics, possess the undoubted power of exciting the lymphatic glands to absorb the local venereal poison (and thus give rise to general lues, which can then only be eradicated by the internal use of mercury), that they moreover cause much pain without being of any material service, they certainly would not at the present day be quarrelling with one another, they would amicably discard their errors on either side.

276. All the objects we would propose to obtain by the employment of local caustics would certainly be best obtained by the use of lunar caustic. It coagulates and destroys with the rapidity of fire, and with the least possible inflammation, all moist animal parts. But how much pain does not the use of even this substance occasion! It makes a slough, beneath which the remainder of the virus cannot escape; when this falls off the ulcer looks clean; we flatter ourselves that recovery is at hand; it dries up, and behold the inguinal glands become painful, a buboe appears—the premonitory symptom of lues; or suddenly the curative process is arrested, the pain the caustic occasions prevents its further use, proud flesh shoots up, which must now in its turn be destroyed. Frequently things do not go on so well with the employment of caustics; under this treatment the edges of the chancre we wish to destroy turn over, tubercles appear round about it, the ulcer commences to bleed readily, it is the seat of constant pain, it eats all about it incessantly, and become a true cancerous sore.

277. Instances are recorded of small chancres having been burnt away by the repeated vigorous application of nitrate of silver, without being followed by lues venerea; but so rare as such cases (Simmons has observed some, I confess I have not been so fortunate), that it is highly dangerous to reckon on such a piece of good luck.

278. But even let us take for granted that with proper care no evil results ensue. Supposing the chancre to disappear without these bad effects, still (I need only refer adepts in the medical art to their own experience) caustics are cruel remedies in chancres, which from the torture they occasion in most cases, change the local virus into a general affection,¹ consequently do more harm than good.

¹ Girtanner asserts that the absorption of the virus is so rare an event under merely local treatment, that I can scarcely believe my own eyes when I read the following words of his: "Of the many chancres," says he, "which I have treated