"A DOCTOR'S HOLIDAY."

Being the Oration delivered before the Medical Society of London, 1894.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—*Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.* All men, whatever their occupation, need periods of relaxation from work. These may come in short intervals of the days of work, and are, by common consent, at certain times of the year, more extended. Men take their rest in various ways. It is possible for some entirely to forget that to which their lives are in the main devoted, and to plunge abruptly into pursuits of altogether different kind. Neither idleness, the *strenua inertia* of the poet, nor distraction, seem to me to be for the physician the most appropriate form of recreation or diversion, if we regard the question from the highest, and, as I think, the most practical point of view. It seems to me that we, who are for the most part of the twelvemonth in close contact with humanity, are studying human beings, and looking on all sides for help in that study, may often find benefit, and always certainly pleasure, when we take leisure in the library, or pleasure afield, to find the truest rest in the riding of some hobby, which gallops one way or the other from man to the Nature around him. We can see instances of the usefulness of such extensions of professional occupation into regions of pleasant diversion in such works as that of the late Dr. Paris, entitled *Philosophy in Sport made Science in Earnest*; in Sir Thomas Browne, in Sir Henry Holland, and in Professor Gairdner's *Physician as a Naturalist*. The last orator of this Society pictured in an eloquent way the help given by literary study to the healer.

I propose to-night to ask you to follow me in a ramble among subjects more or less cognate to our own profession and its studies, in fact, I am going to ask you to go out with me on my autumn holiday. In the autumn of the year before last I was staying for a few days at the Land's End. It happened one day that I had engaged a boatman to take me out a-fishing in Whitsand Bay, a mile or so to the north-east of the point. When I arrived after a pleasant walk I found that fishing was impossible by reason of a great swell coming in from the Atlantic. Yet the bay itself was free from wind, and the sky was clear, so that the sun struck unhindered through the big green rollers as they broke upon the rocks in the mouth of the bay. The bay is formed by a break in the massive cliffs of this iron-bound coast, and is, on the land aspect, a wide expanse of yellow sand, sloping upward to a considerable height. To sit upon some rocks emerging from the sand and to watch the sunrays turned into the most brilliant green as the rollers swept onward was for a time a slothful pleasure. Presently, satiated with this, one began to look about and take in more of the surroundings. On the dry sand above high water mark there first claimed attention a broad band of pale green colour, suggesting the idea of a delicate green veil cast across the bosom of the yellow sand. On investigation this turned out to be a bed of the wave-leaved stock (*Matthiola sinuata*). The sea stock is not in itself a very beautiful plant. Its foliage is coarse, thick, and entirely devoid of symmetry or elegance. It looks like a plant which might have been beautiful, but, like some old statue, has had its fine lines worn away by wind and weather. Its flower is dingy and unattractive, yet its colour, as its leafage was scattered not too closely over the sand, made a beautiful harmony. It had for me, however, a more than redeeming quality. I knew it to be one of those plants which give forth scent at night. Such plants are mostly, in plain terms, ugly. Some of them have a faint scent during the day, increasing through the twilight to the darkness. It was a great delight to me as a boy to go into a little greenhouse containing several speci-

mens of the night-scented stock, well named *Matthiola*, or *Hesperis tristis*, and to enjoy the lively perfume of their flowers, richer and more delicate than the perfume of any day stock. By day the plants were apparently but half alive, and the petals of the flower hung down, shapeless, dingy purple, and, as I may perhaps best express it, unkempt. With night the plant took on a new light, and exhaled its exquisite odour. I wondered then, as I wonder still, what might be the meaning of this nocturnal activity of a plant. It is certain that, in the daytime, plants break up carbon dioxide, retain the carbon, and set free the oxygen. It is, probably, also true that when the sun's influence is absent they absorb oxygen. How much of this is done by the foliage, and how much by the flowers, I do not know, but these plants have almost always made me think that under a process of oxidation odours were produced which could not be evolved when the growing life of the plant was in progress. I suppose that it is certain that this perfume has for its real object the attraction of moths, for the purpose of fertilisation. The cruciferae generally are, no doubt, capable of self-fertilisation, but, in the interest of plants, cross-fertilisation is necessary. And so these plants, so unattractive in every way by day, appeal to the sense of smell of vespertine insects. The whole aspect of flowers which are closed or unattractive by day, and open in the evening or at night, has been suggestively treated by Sir John Lubbock in *The British Wild Flowers in Relation to Insects*.

The belt of sea stock was, as one moved on shoreward, encircled by a crescent of very different colour, a belt of sea holly. As it breaks from the surface of the sand the sea holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) has marked attractions. The form of its leaves is, indeed, very much like the leaves of the holly. Their colour is very noteworthy. It is the glaucous colour which belongs to so many seaside plants. The word "glaucous" may be taken to mean a green colour overlaid with grey, or with blue, or with a film of white. Probably it has its origin from the Sea God (Glaucus), and its meaning is clearly "green, such as of the sea."

The Eringo flower consists of compound heads of considerable size, and rich blue lustre. The blue is not of the violet, nor of the cornflower, but rather a rich turquoise. I will give you the description of it by the old naturalist, Gerarde: "It breaketh forth on the top into prickly or round heads or knops, of the bignesse of a walnut, held in for the most part by six prickly leaves, compassing the top of the stalk round about, which leaves as well as the heads are of a glistening blew; the floures forth of the head are likewise blew, with white threads in the midst." To find a plant of such great beauty springing from the sand, without association of other herbage, creates an impression of strangeness and great contrast. All botanists, however, know that this contrast is not by any means uncommon. On the sandy dunes of our coast there springs from the sand a convolvulus (*soldanella*) surpassing the convolvuli of the inland in size, in form, and in delicacy of colour, having in addition a corolla of porcelain-like texture. And botanists will also remember the little glaucous *maritima*, with its thickly-crowded branches of small, short, closely appressed, and pointed leaves, and its small, solid, pink flowers. Beautiful as the sea holly is above the sand, it has an interest below the surface. It has a root altogether excessive in proportion to the size of the plant as seen on the shore. This root is of about the size of the stem of the laminaria, the oarweed of our shores. To quote Gerarde: "The root is of the bignesse of a man's finger, very long, and so long as that it cannot be all plucked up, unlesse very seldom; set here and there with knots, and of a taste sweete and pleasant."

For at least 300 years, and, I believe, up to the present time, there have been attributed to this root properties of a cordial and restorative nature—nay, more, aphrodisiac. Before Gerarde wrote about it, the aphrodisiac uses in particular must have been generally known. It appears to have been chiefly candied for use, and was at one time produced in large quantities in the South of England, particularly about Colchester.

It is clear that the aphrodisiac qualities attributed by Gerarde and others to the candied eringo were matters of

¹ We are compelled by pressure on space to omit some passages of this interesting address.

belief and practical use in former times. The pages of the Elizabethan dramatists teem with allusions to this quality. In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff (Act v, sc. v), in need of such help, says as follows: "Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of 'Green sleeves,' hail kissing comfits, and snow eringoes."

Elsewhere a potato pie has the same function allotted to it. Now it appears that at the time at which we are speaking the word "potato" was applied to several roots or tubers, namely, to a kind of yam, to the root of a plant belonging to the order Convolvulaceæ, and to the potato as we know it. The first two appear to have been dealt with in common more frequently under the name of "batata" than potato. Both of them were sweet roots, and lent themselves to the preparation of conserves. Neither of them could be cultivated in this country.

In the period of which I have been speaking, and still more in earlier days, the population at large was not very well fed. To a considerable extent fresh meat was a luxury; salted meat and dried or salted fish were the main animal foods of the common people, stock fish, salted and dried cod being very commonly referred to by the comic poets. On the other hand, the use of vegetables seems to have been neglected to a large extent, and there is very little evidence of much systematic cultivation of them. Here and there a cabbage may be referred to, generally in terms of depreciation. Probably the cabbages of that date more resembled the cabbage of our cliffs than the great globes which nowadays are carried in hundreds of thousands to Covent Garden. That the need, however, of the use of vegetable food in some form or other was felt is to be seen in the fact that a great many weeds of the present day were used as, or in, "sallets." In fact, the notoriously great prevalence of scurvy in those days marks the effect of a diet in two ways defective, and the instinctive search for vegetable foods extended far beyond the limits of the garden. That the need was in considerable excess of the supply is indicated here and there by the apparently unattractive qualities of many of the plants used. One can understand that wood sorrel, for instance, would make a very tolerable salad, and still more may it be said of the "lamb's lettuce" or "corn salad," which, though it rarely appears now at our tables in England, is still in common use on the Continent.

But when we come to such a thing as "salad burnet" we find a plant with less pleasant qualities much esteemed. It certainly has a flavour of its own, which may be attractive to some palates, but anyone who has chewed it would, I think, only regard it as food suitable for the lower animals. Indeed, I should be inclined to think that it was mainly used as a flavouring in a general way. It appears to have been frequently infused in wine, to which it was said to give an agreeable flavour, and, as Gerarde puts it, a "grace in the drynkynge."

If one walks along the shore one finds in many places the scurvy grass (*cochlearia*). I suppose that very few people nowadays use this plant. Yet its leaves are succulent, and have a slightly pungent flavour. One may see it in enormous quantities at Lymington, on low banks almost dipping into the sea, and can well understand how scurvy-stricken sailors would be eager to avail themselves of its, to them, restorative qualities. It appears to have been largely used formerly, sometimes in the form of the expressed juice put into beer, or in the form of decoction flavoured with pepper, aniseed, etc., or boiled in milk or wine.

Now I venture to suggest that the potato, so easily grown and so large in its yield, offered, even while in process of acclimatisation, remarkable satisfaction to the craving for carbohydrates and vegetable juices, and that in doing so it restored the vital activities of the people who could make large use of it. In other words, that it was not in itself an aphrodisiac, but that it became so incidentally by helping to bring up men to the condition of health in which their natural instincts would assert themselves. It is, moreover, worthy of remark that in many parts of Ireland the potato is still regarded as conducing to fertility.

It has been particularly interesting to me to consider what kind of edible plants the scurvy-worn sailor would find at hand on coming to shore. The umbelliferæ, to which family the eringo, as you know, belongs, are singularly fond of the

sea shore. They are, for the most part, rather aromatic than succulent, yet the samphire of our cliffs has doubtless formed many a refreshing dish for the mariner. For a moment let us try and enumerate a few of the umbelliferæ which are found by the sea. Everywhere one finds the carrot, with its slightly hollowed disc of sterile white flowers, and its central velvety brown-purple fertile floret. Under the hot sun its foliage assumes rich colours, beautiful to the eye, but not tempting to the palate. Without cultivation its root is of no use. In the same way we may speak of the celery, the parsnip, and perhaps even the fennel, which grows so luxuriantly in the bogs of our Cornish and Devonshire coasts. But besides the cabbage, the kales, and the sea beet, there are other plants that may have come in half in a medical, half in a dietetic way. Such are the goose-foots, the oraches, and many kinds of cress. We may be helped in understanding the old conditions by seeing what holds now in Arctic regions, where the inhabitants find a difficulty in obtaining sufficient vegetable food. The great Polar explorer, Nansen, gives some curious information as to the food of the Eskimo. His list of their vegetable foods is very limited. He states that the old Greenlanders used to eat a number of plants, among which were angelica, dandelion, sorrels, crowberries, whortleberries, and divers kind of seaweed. The angelica was apparently eaten raw. It is one of the many umbelliferæ that grow in vast numbers in damp places, and in wonderful luxuriance, on our coasts. Possibly if it were blanched like celery it might be crisp, as well, as it undoubtedly is, of rich aromatic flavour. It is, as you possibly know, very pleasant when candied, and lends its flavour to the liqueur Chartreuse. The Eskimo eats it as a kind of salad, well anointed with the oil from blubber.

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Scanty as are their vegetable resources, these people do not appear to suffer from scurvy. This is probably due to the fact that they eat largely of animal food, mostly raw, rarely cooked, and, as far as I can find out, never salted. They eat their fish very often frozen, and they are particularly fond of the skin of various species of whale, which is taken off the animal together with the upper layer of fat, and eaten raw. Nansen says that its flavour seems to him to suggest a blending of filberts and oysters. We may suppose that a diet of this kind may, besides being rich in fats, offer some association of carbohydrates. Our imagination may carry us from the smaller animals feeding on vegetable matter, in the sea and on its floor, next devoured by various kinds of fish and crustacea, which in turn may be supposed to be the prey of larger animals, until we come to the cetacea. So far as I know, these take no vegetable food directly. They feed only on other animals, and I presume, from their habitat, they have no fresh water to drink. Yet they do not have scurvy. Their teeth, when they possess them, are healthy, and their skin delicate. The contrast between this food of the Greenlanders and the salted and dried fish of our forefathers is well worth remarking in relation to scurvy. We may remember, also, how the Gauchos of South America live almost entirely on animal food in the form of strips of dried meat, not salted, but eaten in very large quantities, as the meat is in Greenland.

In what we may call the ascending food series, from the small animals living on the bottom of the sea or scattered through it to the great pelagic forms, one may certainly recognise the fact that the muscular tissues are particularly rich in a carbohydrate allied to sugar. This may be noticed in the scallop, in the crustacea.

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There is a certain old town on the coast of Dorset which has afforded me numberless, and yet inexhaustible, rambles. It lies at the mouth of a great valley, between broad chalk downs on the north east and a great mass of oolite on the south west. The floor of the valley belongs to the Wealden, and beyond the downs a tertiary moorland extends for miles into the interior of the country, dotted with large lake-like expansions of a small river, reminding one of the Highlands. Within the compass of a few miles there lies before the Rambler a remarkable variety of flora and of animal life, from an abundance of land and fresh-water mollusca up to the blackcock. There one may find on the oolite the spider orchis, and the "flos Adonis" in the spring. There we may find in the

valley the early purple orchis and the meadow orchis in such profusion as can hardly be matched elsewhere, mingled with cowslip and oxlip, sufficiently present to temper with their pale yellow the rich rosiness of their companions, and I have never seen the adder's tongue fern so densely massed elsewhere as in some of the meadows near the sea. There in summer, on the downs, the bee orchis and the scorched orchis abound, and, later on, in the moorland we find patches of the "gentiana pneumonanthe," of what is there called the Cornish heath, of the rare bog orchis, *malaxis paludosa*, and the bladder wort. On the sandy shore there emerges from the seemingly barren surface the beautiful "convolvulus soldanella," with its scanty foliage and its large thick cup, streaked with delicate pink, and looking almost like a choice piece of porcelain emerging from the sand. There also is the "sheep's scabious," exiguous in its proportions, but retaining its rich blue; and there again the small modest clumps of the *radiola millegrana*. All these are bosomed in the stiff prickly bent, which, rising everywhere, is striving to turn the shifting sandhills into some sort of solid opposition to the inroads of the sea.

There again, as the sand has risen in embankments, little fresh water pools have been formed, with boggy surroundings. These are the home of the buck bean, or bog bean, *menianthes trifoliata*, a plant which always seems to me to have something tropical about its character, in its large, thick, trifoliate leaves, and its spikes of dainty pink flower-ets, with their finely-divided fringe of still paler colour. It is well worth plunging knee deep into the boggy margin to obtain a few specimens of this exquisite flower. I, at least, have often done so. In the soft earth around one finds the tender bog pimpernel, contrasting strangely with the "devil's bit" scabious, the asphodel, beautiful alike in flower and fruit, the sundew, glittering and carnivorous, of which all species can be gathered, and the lesser butterwort, *pinguicula lusitanica*, also probably carnivorous. Before the time of the incursion of a railway into this favourite haunt of mine, I took a well-remembered walk with a companion to the nearest station, about eleven miles distant, avoiding roads, and even paths, so as to explore the country in its original state. I well remember how, coming to a dip in the land traversed by a streamlet, I felt a great throb of pleasure on discovering a sort of hedge of the great yellow loose-strife. Now this plant, which rises to a height of three or four feet, with a pyramid of glorious yellow flowers, is called the *Lysimachia vulgaris*. It is not, in fact, a very common flower, although I have met with it in Dorset, at one end, and in the Cheviots, at the other end, of England. I can hardly understand why it is not more common, seeing that it is easily cultivated in gardens. When we met with it the time was come when we might fairly take a short rest midway on what was a very tough walk, and think about it. The word "vulgaris," as applied to a plant, does not by any means indicate that it is a very common thing. The term rather recognises essentially the plant to which it is applied as the best known of its kind, mostly by reason of one or other quality attracting notice. The term has really the same sort of value as the term "officinum" or "officinalis" bears in relation to medicinal plants. There are other *lysimachia* far more widely spread, such as, for instance, the *Lysimachia nemorum*, which can be found in almost any wood in the South of England; and, on the other hand, there is one which is very much rarer, the *Lysimachia thyrsiflora*, a most graceful plant, growing chiefly in moist places in Ireland. The generic name of the plant had its interest for us as we conversed about. The word "loose-strife" is, of course, a very fair translation of "*Lysimachia*," "the stayer of battle," yet the name is supposed to be derived from some Græco-Sicilian potentate, *Lysimachus*. This is not the only plant which bears the name of "loose-strife" in village botany. The richly-coloured spikes of the *lythrum salicaria* enjoy the title of purple loose-strife. These, as you know, form in summer no small part of the glory of the banks of Thames, and we were met by them later on in a walk where it took us through a flat country traversed by numerous little dykes. Whether to either of these plants has been attributed the property of stilling strife it is hard to say. While in modern botany these two plants find their place in widely separated genera the older herbalists group them together under the

head of "*lysimachia*," apparently because of the willow-like character of their herbage. Moreover, the *onothera* was included in the same group. They seem in old times to have been gathered together around the "vulgaris" type, and the willow-like form of their leaves seem chiefly to have guided the classification. As far as I can make out, their properties were limited to quieting the excitement of oxen. Gerarde writes: "*Lysimachia*, as Dioscorides and Pliny wrote, took his name of a specialle vertue that it hath in appeasing the strife and unrulinesse which falleth out amonge oxen at the plow, if it be put about their yoke." If it be true that *Lysimachus*, the son of Agathocles, was the first finder out of the nature and virtues of this herb, it is probable that the meaning of his name found ultimately its translation into an attribution of new powers.

As an illustration of the changes which London has undergone I find Gerarde saying that the "yellow *lysimachia* groweth plentifully in moist meadows, especially as you go along the meadows from Lambeth to Battersey;" and of the *lythrum* he says: "it groweth under the Bishope's housewall at Lambeth, near the water of Thames." In fact when I am in the museum of St. Thomas's I often think of the purple loose strife that might have shown its virtues there now, but for the intrusion of great buildings into its lowly bed.

I have sometimes thought that these two plants, more or less resembling the willow, or perhaps better, the willow, in their foliage might have drawn their supposed peace-making qualities from their likeness to the shrub, which has been in this country for years the emblem of peace and repentance at Eastertide.

Then the walk goes on. We chat on some of the many ways in which the naming of plants has been brought about. To revert to our first excursion, how came a "stock" to be called "*Matthiola*"? It appears to have been called after an Italian physician, *Matthiolus*, who lived in the 16th century, and was of great authority as a botanist. Now about *Eryngium*. *Eryngium* has a much older origin, being according to Liddell and Scott a diminutive of *ἔρυνγος*. Dioscorides has discussed the virtue of this plant, without, however, indicating the source of the name. The sources of the names of plants are very numerous. Some have been given from their forms and colours, some from their uses, culinary, medical, or poisonous; a good many from supposed likenesses in them to part of the human body, in diseases of which parts they were supposed to have a special healing value. "in respect of their signatures"; certain plants, flowering at particular periods of the year, have come under the dominion of the astrologer; others partly from their time of flowering, from their colour, and the shape of their flowers or leaves, have been associated with the Christian religion. And many other names have come down from classic times, or have their origin lost in the unwritten lore of the country people. It is worthy of remark that in many cases plants which seem to have no botanical affinity are woven together in their naming. For instance, in our chalky districts we find very commonly the long golden spikes of the agrimony, with its beautifully fretted leaves at the base. This is called *agrimonia eupatoria*, and is much used in rustic medicine. You may often see bundles of it hanging inside the doors of cottages. There is another plant, the *Eupatorium cannabinum*, and "hemp agrimony," growing to a height of from 3 to 6 feet on the margins of brooks. This plant belongs to the "Compositæ," and has apparently very little in common with the other agrimony, except in the name "*Eupatorium*." Here "*Eupatorium*" comes in as the generic name in one plant, and the specific name in the other. The link cannot depend upon appearance. Both plants have been used medicinally, and both for the relief of affections of the liver. It is most probable that "*Eupatorium*" means "*Hepatorium*," although Pliny refers the name of "*Eupatorium*" to Eupator, King of Pontus. As a further alliance, both have had repute in the cure of snake bite.

This subject of the naming of plants offers a tempting line to follow, but time intervenes. I will only say that I have lately read a very charming book called *Tongues in Trees and Sermons in Stones*, by the Rev. W. Tuckwell, which has much bearing on this subject, and which I may commend to you as a pleasant companion on a holiday.

The walk of which I have spoken was, as I have said, taken before direct railway communication was established between my pleasant little town and the main line. A few years later I found myself approaching it by train. As, travelling through the tertiary formation, we approached the girdle of chalk down, we passed through a cutting in which was exposed a bed of white clay, topped by a stratum of mould, with a surface of grass. Between the mould and the clay was a thin white layer which looked like chalk. There was evidently something unusual here, inasmuch as the chalk should have been below, instead of above, the clay. The contrast, also, between the layer of mould, at least a foot to 18 inches in length, attracted my notice, as I had just been reading Darwin's book on *Earth Worms*. My first excursion, therefore, after the day of my arrival, a pleasant walk of six miles, was made to this cutting. I soon found that the chalk was roughly broken, not rounded, as it might have been in some cataclysm from the adjoining hills, but apparently placed by human agency in a bed above the clay. Among the chalk, and in the lower part of the mould above, was everywhere abundance of broken pottery, of ancient type. Further exploration brought out the fact that the beds of clay were still being worked for use in pottery, the clay being shipped in large quantity to Staffordshire. My discovery was only a discovery for myself. I soon learned that in the workings clear evidence had been for some years obtained of the existence of a very large Roman pottery around the cutting I have mentioned. Many perfect jugs and vases had been disinterred, and the remains of old sheds and grinding stones had been exposed. On my walk back I saw in a window in the village adjoining a small Roman vase doing duty as a flower pot. It seemed to me, from the condition of the surface of the clay that all the growth of mould had taken place since the Roman labourer had bared it and formed his platform of chalk. So that here one had a sort of measure in from 8 to 18 inches of thickness of the slow up-building of a new stratum by the agency of the earth worm. Each inch must have taken one or two centuries. I hardly think that I should have been attracted as I was had it not been for the recent reading of the splendid work to which I refer.

And now, Mr. President and Gentlemen, our ramble must come to an end. In this holiday we have been, I hope, enjoying Nature and books, things which, I maintain, are cogent to the genius of our profession, but in its shorter and greater leisure. The pleasure which I have drawn from both in many a holiday time will, I trust, justify me before you in the choice of my subject. And, as for books, Horace has been greatly honoured of late by a great statesman. He (Horace) is a great friend of mine. I began this oration with him, and I will end with him, but not in the "amatory way" of the great statesman. I am not original in choosing this quotation. Sterne, in his immortal *Tristram Shandy*, pleads in these words for forgiveness for having taken the more cheerful view of the lives of men:

Dixero si quid forte jocosius, hoc mihi juris
Cum venia dabis.

ON VAGINAL HYSTERECTOMY.¹

By LOMBE ATTHILL, M.D.,

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MALIGNANT disease of the uterus has, till within the last few years, been invariably fatal. To diagnose it correctly was, in fact, in all cases synonymous with pronouncing sentence of death, and that, too, by a slow, painful, and irksome process. The patient died worn out by pain, exhausted by frequently-recurring hæmorrhages, or of septicæmia. Seldom does any disinfectant suffice to remove the fætor of the discharges in the advanced stages of cancer. No wonder that the dread of the loathsome disease is present to the mind of nearly every woman who may suffer from any form of chronic uterine trouble. No wonder that vigorous efforts have been made by many surgeons to arrest its progress, and possibly to cure these sufferers, by means of the actual cautery, by the free

application of powerful caustics, by amputating the lower segment of the uterus when the seat of malignant disease, by curetting the cavity when it was primarily affected, or, as advocated by the late Dr. Marion Sims, by dissecting off with knives specially made for the purpose the whole of the intra-uterine surface, and then filling the cavity with cotton saturated with a strong solution of chloride of zinc.

All these proceedings are vain; I have tried them all myself, and have seen them tried over and over again, and in no one case of any form of true cancer did anything more than temporary benefit follow. Now hysterectomy is an accepted operation, the mortality following its performance is small, and, if cases be properly selected, the prospect of the recurrence of the disease is certainly less than when other organs are attacked by cancer. That this should be so is easily understood, for the uterus is not alone not essential to life, but is as it were isolated from the general system. Of this I am satisfied that malignant disease of the uterus is in general, and when the cavity of the uterus is the primary seat of disease, always in the first instance a pure local affection, and that it is not till it has reached a comparatively advanced stage that the system becomes infected.

I shall relate three cases in which hysterectomy was performed on patients under my care, and then shall endeavour to point out the lessons to be deduced from them.

CASE I.—Miss —, aged 42, came under my care in February, 1890. She had been always healthy, and had lived an active life. Menstruation had been normal till about a year ago, when she first noticed it to be profuse, then that the flow recurred at shorter intervals. She began to lose flesh, and suffered from pains in the lower third of the back. In December, 1889, she had an alarming attack of hæmorrhage, which compelled her to seek medical advice. Since then had seldom been free from a watery hæmorrhagic discharge. A digital examination proved the vaginal portion of the uterus to be healthy. The fundus was very large, but quite movable; the os patulous and the introduction of the sound was followed by hæmorrhage. I diagnosed epithelioma of the cavity. I did not at the time inform the patient of my opinion, but advised that the uterus should be dilated and its cavity explored. I made this suggestion more with the view of verifying my diagnosis than with the hope of effecting much good. Accordingly, a few days later, this was done, and I removed with the curette a large quantity of soft growth, which was plainly cancerous. I then injected tincture of iodine, and on three or four occasions subsequently 15 minims of iodised phenol. At the time of the operation I suggested to her medical attendant the advisability of performing hysterectomy, but he thought the risk to life too great.

The patient improved greatly after this, and there was no return of the hæmorrhage or of the pain for nearly two months, but at the expiration of that time she came to me and stated that she had become as bad as ever. I then told her that her only hope lay in the removal of the whole organ. She at once consented to undergo the operation, which I performed on May 1st, 1890. During the four years which have since elapsed I have had this lady under my observation, and am happy to say that she is in the enjoyment of most excellent health. The uterus was examined by Dr. Bewley, whose report I append.

"Length of uterus, 4½ inches; length of cavity, 3½ inches; weight, 5½ ozs. The uterine tissue felt firm and healthy externally. On opening the organ the cavity was found to be large. The mucous membrane at the os and for half an inch up from it was healthy; then for 1½ inch the surface was irregular and ulcerated, and covered with soft polypoid growths. The ulceration had in one place—on the anterior aspect—extended to the surface of the uterus, but perforation had not occurred. The upper 1½ inch of the intrauterine mucous membrane was quite healthy. The uterine wall in the central ulcerated region was more transparent than elsewhere; it was fairly hard, though not as tough as normal uterine tissue. This part of the uterine wall showed cancerous infiltration—that is, polygonal epithelial cells were growing between the muscular bundles, either in the form of irregular masses or of large irregular-shaped tubular glands. The tissues cut through at the operation seemed healthy, although the cancerous cells had extended so as to be very near the surface indeed."

CASE II.—Miss —, aged 57, consulted me in February, 1893. She had ceased to menstruate at about the age of 30. This she believed to have been the result of a lengthened residence in Switzerland, but her health in no way suffered, and she did not observe anything wrong till about eighteen months previously, when a colourless watery vaginal discharge occasionally appeared; this by degrees became more profuse and deeper coloured, till of late it was continuous and sanguineous. The fundus of the uterus, though large, was quite free, and the cervix healthy. The introduction of the sound was followed by sharp bleeding. In this case I merely dilated the cervix sufficiently to enable me to remove with a small curette a portion of the intrauterine surface for examination, which verified the opinion previously formed as to the nature of the case, and a few weeks later the patient submitted to hysterectomy, which, on account of her means being very limited, was performed in the Rotunda Hospital by Dr. W. Smyly. This patient is still under my observation, and there is no reason to doubt that she is perfectly cured.

CASE III. On August 4th last Mrs. — was sent to me by Dr. Britton, of Strabane. She had been a widow for twenty years, and had given birth to five children. She was in her 58th year. Menstruation did not cease till she was 52, and for the three following years her health had been fairly good, though she never was strong. In the autumn of 1891 she observed a red sanguineous discharge to recur at irregular intervals, and about two months before she came to me she had an attack of regular hæmorrhage, which weakened her greatly, but she did not suffer any

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