ment follows, we may reasonably suspect the case not to be of a genuine venereal kind. Though frictions are, with a few exceptions, to be preferred to all other modes of using mercury in the treatment of syphilitic symptoms, in those affecting the eye they are not sufficiently active; nor would it be prudent, in the first instance, to join them with the pills, because these latter will seldom disappoint us; and by attempting to introduce mercury too rapidly into the system, we often defeat our purpose of exciting its proper constitutional action, and render this afterwards more difficult of accomplishment.

"It is almost unnecessary to remark, that, in the treatment of this ophthalmia, confinement can less be dispensed with than in that of any other symptom of lues venerea." pp. 58-61.

He regards blood-letting and blistering as quite unnecessary, and collyria and other topical remedies of no use. Eye-waters are certainly useless, as are most local means in a deep-seated inflammation; but we cannot say the same for general or even local blood-letting, which, if sufficiently copious, we have always found of great benefit, and particularly energetic in keeping the inflammatory process at bay, till the mercurial action began to operate.

IV.

Official Report on the Fever which appeared on board his Majesty's Ship Bann, on the Coast of Africa, and amongst the Detachment of Royal Marines, forming the Garrison of the Island of Ascension, in the Year 1823. By WILLIAM BURNETT, M. D., one of the Commissioners of the Medical Department of his Majesty's Navy, Physician in Ordinary to his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, and Honorary Fellow of the Imperial Medico-Chirurgical Academy of St Petersburg. London. 1824.

THIS slender volume is valuable on account of the authenticity of the statements it contains, and the temperate judgment of the author. One fact recorded in it is particularly valuable, because the circumstances connected with it can so rarely occur, and are exactly those which seem to constitute, if any circumstances can constitute, an *experimentum crucis* as to the supposed contagious nature of any disease.

The Island of Ascension was uninhabited until 1815, when Bonaparte was sent to St Helena, and it became a matter of precaution to occupy Ascension with a few British troops. Till this time it was only visited during the turtle season, for the sake

of that fishery, so that there existed no source of disease as derived from its being the habitation of man, or domestic animals. After it was occupied, the troops were liable to all the endemic causes of disease, arising from the soil, and climate, and season of the year. As might be expected, the amount of disease derived from these sources would vary somewhat in different years; but an unprecedented diffusion of disease, and increase of mortality, occurring in such a situation immediately after the arrival of a vessel with a sick crew, give the strongest presumption that the arrival of the vessel, and the increased sickness, were connected as cause and effect; or, in other words, that a contagious disease had been imported. Such appears to have taken place after the arrival of the *Bann*, a sick ship from Sierra Leone. During the seven preceding years 12 died, and of these only 2 from fever; but in two months after the arrival of the *Bann*, there died, of a fever having the same character as that which prevailed in that vessel, 15 of the garrison, besides 2 boys and 4 women.

We quote the account of the medical topography of this singularly situated spot of land in the middle of the ocean.

"The island of Ascension, in circumference about twenty miles, is situated in the ocean, in lat. $08^{\circ} 56'$ south, longitude $15^{\circ} 27'$ west, at the distance of many leagues from any other land, with a trade wind from the south S. E. constantly blowing over it; and being of volcanic origin, nearly the whole of its surface, excepting the Green Mountain, has a corresponding appearance, being (as in the neighbourhood of the garrison) of a dry, arid, and barren nature, with volcanic stones overlaying a quantity of mouldering pumice. On some of the more elevated spots, it is composed of ashes which extend to a considerable depth; still there are a few places where a fine light mould is met with about half a foot below the surface.

"At this island, in the month of April, the thermometer in the shade stands, from noon till nearly two p. m. at from 85° to 88° , generally 87° ; and as the evening advances, gradually falls to between 76° and 80° . About two o'clock in the morning, a further reduction of one or two degrees takes place, which continues till five a. m. when the heat progressively advances till mid-day. In May the heat generally declines a little, and is commonly from 84° to 85° in the day, and from 75° to 76° at other times, which is probably owing to showers of rain, which prevail at this season.

"With respect to the heat of the summer in general, a sensible increase takes place in December, the thermometer being at noon towards the end of the month, at 86° ; in January it advances about two degrees; and in February, and till the middle of March, it is often found at noon to have attained to 90° or 91° , sometimes 93° , and at these times the dews are heavy, and are seen in the morn-

ing. It appears, that in general the rains are not of long duration, though commonly heavy; pools of water are sometimes formed, but disappear in the course of a few hours: these rains, however, occurring for the most part at the turtle season, appear to have produced occasionally attacks of fever and dysentery, and it was at this period the Bann arrived.

"The posts occupied by the detachment, which consisted of thirty-five officers and men, were three in number, namely, the principal one or barrack, which is situated low, and surrounded by high grounds, about one hundred yards from the sea, is formed by several detached houses nine or ten feet square, and a large barrack-room, about forty feet long and fifteen broad: in this last there were about sixteen people residing. The several buildings are arranged in the form of a square, the smaller ones being occupied for stores, or by families, and the quarters of the officers are situated on the elevated ground to the south-east of the square, about twelve feet above it, and there the temperature was about two degrees lower.

"In the front of this barrack, and about one hundred yards from the sea, a well was dug, by the first garrison, about fifteen feet deep, being three feet below the level of the sea, in the hope of obtaining fresh water by its percolation through the sand; it was found, however, to be perfectly unchanged, rising and falling with the tide, on the reflux of which the well was left nearly dry, and the water remaining in it foul and offensive.

"The post called Springs is situated at the distance of four miles and a half in a S. E. direction from the barracks, being at an elevation of about nine hundred feet above them, and, with regard to the soil, corresponds, on its surface, in many places, with the neighbourhood of the barracks. There, however, the thermometer is commonly two degrees lower, and the relative variation is still greater in the twenty-four hours, being often in a ratio of 9° , 10° , and 12° . In some places the ground is covered with a superficial layer of earth, with here and there spots favouring vegetation. The same kind of volcanic ashes are also met with, but they are more compactly united; and the people lived in caves, hollowed out of this substance, in the sides of the mountain.

"The post on the Green Mountain, being about 2500 feet above the level of the sea, is situated immediately above Springs, at the distance of nearly a mile; and, on ascending thereto, the ground is seen completely to change its character. All trace of volcanic matter is lost; and it presents to the view a mass of calcareous rocks, covered to a great extent with a thin surface of earthy soil, which throughout the year is favourable to vegetation.

"This post is for days enveloped in clouds, occasioning catarrh and rheumatism; but the soil remains dry. The heat is from four to five degrees lower in the day than at the garrison, and at night from eight to nine. In July and August, the thermometer often stands at 65° in the morning, and the maximum is 80° . In February

and March, the hottest season, the greatest height it attains is 85°." pp. 6-9.

The following is the abstract of the state of health from 7th March 1816 to 7th May 1823, or during seven years.

Disease.	Put on the sick List.	Discharged to Duty.	Invalided.	Died.
Continued Fever - -	10	9	-	1
Bilious Remittent Fever - -	11	10	-	1
Fever - - -	2	2	-	-
Dysentery - - -	44	34	3	7
Diarrhœa - - -	3	3	-	-
Cholera - - -	3	3	-	-
Pneumonia - - -	6	5	1	-
Chronic Hepatitis - -	24	13	10	1
Rheumatism - - -	6	4	2	-
Apoplexy - - -	1	-	-	1
Epilepsy - - -	1	-	1	-
Paralysis - - -	1	1	-	-
Ophthalmia - - -	1	1	-	-
Asthma - - -	1	-	-	1
Vertigo - - -	1	-	1	-
Inguinal Hernia - -	1	1	-	-
Fistula Lachrymalis - -	1	1	-	-
Coup de Soleil - -	1	1	-	-
Pulmonic Inflammation - -	2	2	-	-
Scurvy - - -	3	3	-	-
Fracture - - -	3	2	-	-
Wounds and Accidents - -	3	2	1	-
Other Complaints - -	3	3	-	-
Total	132	100	19	12

On the 27th of March 1823, the Bann sailed, with a sickly crew, from Sierra Leone, and arrived at Ascension on the 20th April. At the time of the Bann's arrival, the inhabitants, consisting of a garrison of 35 marines, officers and men, with some women and children, were in good health. We have now to observe what followed.

"The report of Mr Thompson, the medical officer of the garrison, states, that the appearance of the fever amongst them is dated eighteen days after the arrival of the Bann, viz. on the 11th of May; but he adds, however, that one of the people was attacked as early as the 28th of April with symptoms of fever, which he then thought might be a mild case of the Bann's, which was scarcely above two days after the landing of the sick. The man thus attacked was a convalescent on the 7th of May. On the 11th of May, a boy (son

of one of the sergeants) was violently attacked, and ultimately died; but it is neither known nor believed that he had any nearer communication with the sick of the Bann than passing daily at no great distance from the tents to feed his father's poultry, and he was never on board that ship. Up to this time the restrictions on the intercourse between the ship herself and the garrison had not been much attended to, and certainly not at all as regards the communication of the garrison with each other; several things, such as sideboards, &c. had been landed from the Bann, which had been brought by her from Sierra Leone, and some of the officers and men had gone on board that ship (after the sick were landed), to the sale of the effects of some deceased person. From this time, however, every proper precaution was taken for preventing the extension of the disease to the outposts; notwithstanding which, six men, two women, and seven children, were taken ill at Springs, but fortunately none at the Green Mountain, though one of the men belonging to that post had been on board the Bann, at the sale before mentioned. Some days after the arrival of the Bann, Captain Phillips took up his residence at Springs; but, though he was much indisposed with a low fever, both the surgeon of the Bann and the assistant of the garrison are of opinion, that he did not suffer from the prevailing fever.

"About this time, the fever in the Bann had nearly ceased; but it went on, daily attacking some of the garrison; and it appears, by the official report, that twenty-eight were taken ill, of which number fifteen died, and thirteen recovered. Independently of the officers and marines above stated, two boys were attacked, both of whom died; and of six women four died; seven children likewise suffered attacks of this fever, all of whom recovered; but, unfortunately, three younger children, the eldest being only four months old, died from want of their usual sustenance, after the demise of their mothers." pp. 13-15.

The disease ceased in the island about the 16th June.

The progress of the disease on board of the Bann, is described in the following extracts.

"His Majesty's sloop Bann anchored off Free Town, Sierra Leone, on the 11th of January 1823, and continued there until the 25th of March, her ship's company on board being in excellent health. On this day, one case of fever, having severe inflammatory symptoms, was put on the sick list, and the patient died on the 30th, the fifth day of his illness. On the 26th, the master and two seamen were attacked in the same manner, and recovered. On the 27th, the Bann sailed from Sierra Leone."—"Between this time and the 31st of March, three more cases occurred on board the Bann. On the 31st, one case of the same kind was added to the list; and on the 3d of April, four more of her people were seized with the same complaint.

"From this time the sick list rapidly increased, and, according to the account of Captain Phillips, beginning forward in the ship, came

gradually to the after part, till nearly all the officers and men were attacked; indeed, when it ceased, at Ascension, only about sixteen had escaped of the officers and ship's company. The total number attacked was ninety-nine, of whom thirty-four died, fifteen of them before the Bann reached Ascension."—"The ship was ordered to St Thomas's, but from the unhealthy state of the crew, and the bad weather, it was deemed advisable to proceed directly to the Island of Ascension; and on her arrival at that place, on the 25th of April, tents were immediately erected on shore at the distance of nearly five hundred yards from the garrison, with which all intercourse was interdicted, and the whole of the sick, amounting to forty-five, labouring under the prevailing fever, were landed, and placed in the tents provided for them." pp. 3-5.

From these facts Dr Burnett draws a conclusion, in which we cannot but concur.

"There cannot, however, I think, be a doubt of its having possessed contagious properties afterwards, and of its having been introduced into the Island of Ascension by the Bann; still, even here, difficulties occur in accounting for many circumstances, particularly the attack of two posts, and the exemption of a third, viz. the Green Mountain (where there were six soldiers, one woman, and two children), when the communication was open for eighteen days, and one of these persons had even been on board the Bann for some time. I have, however, formed my own opinion, from a consideration of all the circumstances of the case; and I have narrated the whole of the facts connected with it, as far as they have come to my knowledge, with the utmost impartiality, without suppressing or distorting one of them; and I must, after they have read the remainder of this Report, leave others to form their own." pp. 25, 26.

There are some other interesting facts and statements in this volume, tending to support our author's opinion, that the yellow fever, as it is called, is not *ab origine* contagious, but may become so under particular circumstances; but we decline entering upon them, as we wish to present our readers with the preceding observation, alone and distinct from every other, which might give opportunity for that special pleading which rather displays the ingenuity of the partisan, than advances the progress of knowledge.

V.

Practical Remarks on Lacerations of the Uterus and Vagina, with Cases. By THOMAS M'KEEVER, M. D., late Assistant to the Dublin Lying-in Hospital. London, Longman & Co., &c. 1824.

THIS little tract contains a good deal of interesting information on a formidable accident, to which the uterus and