

part, I have used iodol as a dressing for chancroids, and have had excellent results; it has the very great advantage over iodoform of being inodorous, and consequently can be employed in private practice. I do not know what iodol will do in cases of phagedenic chancroid, and I think that when we find ourselves in presence of this complication, we should act with the greatest energy in employing either the chloride of zinc, pyrogallic acid, or the red-hot iron, and subsequently dressing with iodoform, iodol, or salicylic acid.

Treatment of Syphilis.

In closing my letter, I will call attention to Dr. Mauriac's method of treating syphilis, which appeared in the *Semaine Médicale*, August 18, 1886. He does not believe it necessary to direct systematic medication against the syphilitic diathesis in the intervals of freedom from its manifestations; for the preventive action of the two drugs against syphilis par excellence, *i. e.*, mercury and the iodide of potassium, seems to be much inferior to their curative action. When manifestations show themselves, they should be attacked with one or the other of these drugs or by both at once, according to the nature and intensity of the lesions. In the interval, when the organism has returned to its normal state, the indication is to suspend treatment until a new course of specific medication is called for. According to the author, we must not be exclusive in the use of mercury and the iodide. Both have their indications and their usefulness. The iodide should be employed as often as there are present what were formerly called tertiary manifestations. Whether they be so considered from the form and features of the lesions or from the date at which they occur or time they have existed, Dr. Mauriac himself gives the iodide, even for the primary sore, whenever the induration is excessive or whenever it takes on an ulcerative or phagedenic appearance. On the other hand, it must not be believed that mercury should only be prescribed in the secondary period. There is at the present time a common notion that it should be used in the period called tertiary, in the treatment of nearly all the specific visceral lesions, either conjointly with the iodide or in alternating with it when large doses of both drugs are being used.

L. BROCCQ.

PARIS.

DERMATITIS FROM RHUS VERNIX.

Editor of the Journal of Cutaneous and Venereal Diseases.

DEAR SIR :—Having noticed letters in your JOURNAL concerning the poison of rhus toxicodendron and its cure, I wish to mention a similar disease common in the East, and its treatment.

Many foreigners, as well as natives, in the East are often troubled with what is termed "varnish poisoning." It is in some cases so distressing that the person cannot pass a furniture shop, where articles are being varnished, without being poisoned. With others it comes on after actual contact with furniture freshly decorated with the poisonous varnish. I have also noticed that comparatively old articles possess the poisonous property during the rainy season, when everything is covered with dampness.

As I am quite liable to the disease, a description of its effects upon myself may be in place. The first eruption occurred, while in Nanking, over my left eye, spreading to my forehead and nose. It itched and burned, causing great discom-

fort and disfiguring the face. Being ignorant of the effect of the Chinese varnish, I diagnosed the trouble as "herpes zoster frontalis," and treated it accordingly, but with poor results. Later I had a very severe attack in Shanghai, after receiving a new chair from a Chinese cabinet maker. The forehead became hot and itched intolerably; mind clouded, slight fever, and anorexia, followed by the appearance of minute vesicles on a raised base; swelling increased till the eyes were all but closed. It was diagnosed as "facial erysipelas," and I was urged to go to the general hospital. This being inexpedient, and there being a slight doubt as to the verity of the diagnosis, consultation was called and it was pronounced "varnish poisoning."

The treatment ordered was constant bathing in an infusion made from freshly cut camphor-wood shavings. These being less easy to obtain than the gum, aqua camphoræ was tried and found useless, after which instructions were followed out to the letter. In two hours from the first application, relief was obtained, and in twelve hours the trouble had disappeared. I have since often prescribed this treatment in foreign and native practice. It never fails; while the spirits and water of camphor, which are usually tried first, on the sly, always do fail.

This poisonous varnish is made from the rhus vernix or vernicia and is often mixed with iron rust, lime, and ox blood. It seems that it would at least be worth while to try this treatment for poisons of the rhus toxicodendron.

Sincerely yours, H. N. ALLEN, M.D.

SEOUL, KOREA, Sept. 14, 1886.

UNGUENTUM BELLADONNÆ IN RHUS-POISONING.

To the Editor of the Journal of Cutaneous and Venereal Diseases.

SIR:—I have been somewhat surprised at seeing so much in your JOURNAL relative to the treatment of rhus-poisoning, and yet nothing said of what I have long regarded the most important remedy in this troublesome disease; until, in the November number of the CUTANEOUS AND VENEREAL JOURNAL, Dr. T. J. Reid, of Chicago, mentions the proper remedy. I have long been in the habit of using belladonna in the treatment of rhus-poisoning, not the green vegetable bruised and mixed with fresh cream, as the doctor suggests, but in the form of the officinal belladonna ointment, locally applied. I have used this ointment in the treatment of many cases, and have never yet observed any bad results, but have uniformly seen the eruption disappear in from two to five days. I have never yet witnessed a return of the eruption treated with the belladonna ointment, without a fresh exposure to the poison. I have never used a solution of atropiæ sulphas which would perhaps act equally well as the ointment, and, no doubt, would be more cleanly.

I hope others will try this treatment, and report the result.

Respectfully,

JOHN H. BAILEY.

BORDLY, KY., Nov. 17th, 1886.

BELLADONNA IN THE TREATMENT OF RHUS-POISONING.

To the Editor of the Journal of Cutaneous and Venereal Diseases.

SIR:—I notice on page 345 an article by T. J. Reid, M.D., on the use of "nightshade" in the treatment of severe poisoning by "poison oak."

In 1850, I was poisoned badly by using some leaves of the poison oak after de-