

**THE TREATMENT OF VENEREAL
DISEASES: A MONOGRAPH
ON THE METHOD PURSUED IN
THE VIENNA HOSPITAL**

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The Treatment of venereal diseases: A Monograph on the Method Pursued in the Vienna Hospital by M. H. Henry

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M. H. HENRY

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PREFACE.

THIS MONOGRAPH is a republication from the pages of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SYPHILOGRAPHY AND DERMATOLOGY—issue of April, 1872. Its intrinsic value is a sufficient reason for presenting it in book-form.

The Vienna Hospital department for venereal diseases is probably the largest and best appointed in the world. In it thousands of cases come under the care of scientific and skilled observers. It results that a *résumé* of the experiences in this establishment cannot fail greatly to extend our own knowledge and afford more reliable data and inductions in the treatment of this class of diseases in this country,—for *experientia docet* was assuredly never more applicable than in venereal therapeutics.

To the practitioner the minute details of treatment will be of especial interest and value; while the numerous formulæ (including about two hundred) afford a liberal choice in the management of these affections.

157 WEST THIRTY-FOURTH STREET,
NEW YORK, May, 1872.

THE VIENNA HOSPITAL

TREATMENT OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

EXPERIENCE has proved that the assumption that every practitioner of medicine is perfectly familiar with the therapeutics and essentials of treatment in venereal and the kindred diseases is, to say the least, a rash one. We have in this country—and it is a lack deeply to be regretted—no hospital in which this specialty may be studied on a large scale. The general directions given in the treatises in our language regarding the application of therapeutics are, moreover, meagre, since they fail to cover the *details* which form so considerable a part of the practitioner's duty.

The following pages are a contribution towards filling this void, presenting as they do the results of practice in the foremost hospital of Continental Europe, namely, the Vienna Hospital, under the direction of Professor Von Sigmund.

It is to this celebrated institution, where German acumen, patient study, and faithful recording have been so admirably exemplified, that we owe the most valuable advances made in venereal pathology and therapeutics during the last twenty years. This fact will be a sufficient justification of the very minute directions and the long list of formulæ given in subsequent pages.

The position occupied by the great German syphilographer as chief of the clinic for syphilitics as well as the wards devoted to the treatment of venereal diseases has afforded him the

extraordinary opportunities for deciding on the best course of treatment to be pursued not only in large institutions, but in the every-day walks of private life. The details which form so large an element in the successful treatment of any disease, are thoroughly explained. The large number of prescriptions marked "similar," as well as the statement of their comparative cost, will doubtless prove serviceable at times, and at least extend the resources of treatment at the command of the practitioner. The matter of cost will doubtless be of service to those in charge of hospitals and dispensaries.

An essential feature in the treatment of venereal diseases,—the enforcement of hygienic measures especially adapted to each individual case, is very properly advocated, and the fullest directions given to ensure the best results. These alone suffice, in many cases, to secure at least a very great improvement, if not a cure; whereas, in most cases the very best remedies have but a very imperfect effect, if any at all, when not aided by appropriate hygienic measures. Of the latter the most important is cleanliness; and its neglect, even in this day, is chiefly the cause of the spreading, protraction, and aggravation of these diseases. It becomes, therefore, one of the most essential duties of the practitioner in these diseases, not only to give such orders as are suitable to the case in question, but by constant supervision to see that they are literally complied with.

I. Nationality, custom, and mode of life cause peculiarities as regards care of the person, clothing, and dwelling; the adaptation of his directions to these conditions is left as much as possible to the practical good sense of the physician. Still, he should in all cases insist upon the strictest cleanliness of the body in all its parts. This is of especial importance in the case of the genital organs and their neighborhood, the scalp, mouth, nose, pharynx, hands and feet, and, in women, the breasts—parts which, from their being more frequently the seat of disease and the *locals* of treatment, are especially to be borne in mind. The removal of vermin demands particular attention, especially lice hid in the parts of the body covered by hair, and the itch insect. Not less attention should be paid to the patient's clothing, his body as well as bed-linen; also his apartment, and particularly the

atmosphere by day and night, together with his moral surroundings and his actions.*

II. In institutions for the sick, one of the most important duties of the physician is the thorough carrying out of all rules for cleanliness; and, in the treatment of venereal diseases, equal attention should be paid to the maintenance of proper ventilation, light, and temperature. The air of inhabited rooms contains many and dangerous germs of disease, which will, unless sufficient ventilation be provided, and the greatest care taken when exposing wounds, exert the most baneful influences upon the patients who remain constantly in it. Tobacco smoking, unfortunately so universal nowadays, should be permitted only in large and well-ventilated apartments which are occupied only by single patients; it is not admissible in sick-wards. Tobacco smokers should, moreover, be particular to keep their mouths, throat, and also their fingers very clean, for various reasons. Snuffing, and what is worse yet, chewing, should be strictly forbidden the patient.

III. Well-lighted and moderately-warmed rooms should be provided for the washing of the patients. In most cases tepid or warm baths, vapor baths, douches, friction, etc., with simple water, or with soap, or with water in which is mixed some soda or potash, are sufficient. Where, however, foreign substances are met with upon the skin, and are more or less firmly adherent, there may be used, as the nature of the case demands, potash soap, soft soap, fats (cod-liver oil, olive oil, lard, glycerine, etc.), alcohol, ether, or tar. Besides the bare hand, a glove, or a piece of woollen rag, may be made use of. These are better means than the customary sponge, which is a very doubtful, not to say really dangerous cleansing article. Especially when diseases are of a contagious nature, the sponge should never be tolerated in a hospital.

* Among other things, strict attention should be given to the closet and excrement vessels, which may be the seat of highly injurious emanations, and of matter which, upon contact, is highly inoculable—an extremely disagreeable task for the physician who has so much else to attend to; yet, in the final result of all his labors, he often has to pay for the neglect of that which is more often neglected than anything else—the water-closet.

IV. Specific instructions should be given concerning the use of baths, as regards place, time, temperature, and duration. When medicaments are to be added to the baths, the quantity and mode of solution should be accurately stated. It is the custom of female patients to neglect all measures of cleanliness during the period of menstruation. This has, alas! been the cause of much contamination, especially in the lower classes of the populace. Particularly during this period should cleansing, with at least simple warm water, be insisted upon. This is also applicable to the period of pregnancy, and more particularly to the parturient state, when, besides mere washings, injections with medicated solutions (§ V.) should be assiduously and carefully used. The presence of the hymen necessarily forbids the careful use of injections. When the vaginal mucous membrane is the seat of disease the customary hip-baths (*sitz-baths*) are insufficient.

V. The particular cleansing of diseased portions of the body must be regulated by the individual case. For this purpose use is generally made either of plain water of various degrees of temperature, or of solutions in water of various simple and easily obtainable substances, such, for example, as the chlorate of potash (1-2-4 drachms), carbonate of potash or soda (1-2 drachms), and chloride of lime (2-4 drachms), to the pint of water, which latter, if hard, thereby becomes soft, and at the same time acquires disinfecting properties. With the latter object in view phenyl acid (carbolic acid) may be added to simple water (1-3 drachms to the pint), which is then a solution generally applicable to all inflamed wounds and ulcers, especially when attended with offensive purulent or muco-purulent discharges.

VI. For the application of these solutions syringes and irrigators are the best adapted. With these, without the aid of any sponge, and with a little dexterity, the very best results may be obtained in every portion of the body. Particularly may this be asserted of irrigators, which in almost every case may not only supplant the syringe, but may be used with more certainty and delicacy, and are, moreover, easier to keep clean

and require less frequent repairs.* In public institutions they may be of various shapes and sizes, likewise of various materials (wood, metal, glass), and furnished with rubber pipes. The ward attendants should be thoroughly instructed in their proper use. Of course, syringes are absolutely necessary for certain portions of the body; but, by the application of appropriate mouthpieces, only a few of these are necessary.

VII. The simplest dressing, common water, is seldom applicable to venereal wounds or ulcers. If one is careful, in the washing of the latter, to have perfectly pure water, he should be still more careful as to the perfect purity of that which is used as a dressing. Now, perfectly pure water is not only difficult to obtain, but also to maintain pure. Water impregnated with salts or lime will be much improved by boiling, or by mixing it with certain materials already mentioned (§ V.). Great care should be taken that the water is not kept in vessels which are not well covered, or which are so situated as to be exposed to the reception of impurities, whether in the shape of gases or of injurious particles from the atmosphere (as in the case of propinquity to the closets, drains, cellars, etc.) Open vessels are especially liable to a deposit from the atmosphere, frequently in a not inconsiderable quantity, according to circumstances (hospital wards, dead-houses, etc.), of highly noxious molecules. The test with collodium paper in a hospital ward demonstrates this conclusively.†

The choice of medicated dressings, solutions, salves, plasters, or poultices, etc., must be determined according to each individual case.

VIII. Fluid dressings are applied to wounds and ulcers by means of pencils‡ of camel's hair, wool, cotton, charpie, etc.,

* By means of irrigators, the local baths of institutions where venereal patients use one vessel, sitz-baths, hand-baths, etc., can be dispensed with, and thereby one great source of infection avoided. For the special use of certain medicaments the local baths still maintain their usefulness, but even then they should be kept scrupulously clean.

† As far as possible, the patients should make use of smooth white glass or porcelain vessels; metallic vessels should always be kept highly polished.

‡ Pencils are made from wool, and so many only as are sufficient for immediate use should be made. Pledgets of cotton, fastened to the end of a little stick,