

THE PRACTICE OF SUN-CURE FOR SURGICAL CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS AND ITS CLINICAL RESULTS.*

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[Abridged.]

Ten years' treatment by sun-cure at a high altitude enables us to affirm to-day that this treatment cures external forms of tuberculosis in every form, at all degrees and at all ages. Surgical tuberculosis is not, as it has long been thought, a local affection requiring local treatment only. It is above all and essentially a general ailment, demanding in the first place a general treatment. Of all infectious diseases, it is the one where the whole body plays a most important part. Its rational treatment will therefore aim at a fundamental reconstitution of the whole frame. As far as local treatment is concerned, to be rational, it should invariably assist the defence of the organism and never oppose itself to it.

The methodical application of heliotherapeutics, of which we made the first mention in 1903, associated with the cure at a high altitude or by the sea, fulfils these conditions as far as possible. One knows, on the one hand, that the sun-cure in general—that is to say, the direct action of the sun and air on the whole surface of the teguments—constitutes the most energetic tonic and the best reconstituent. On the other hand, the sun-cure realises the most perfect local treatment, since it is recognised to-day that sunlight at the same time reduces the pain, forms a powerful microbicide agent, and conduces most powerfully to sclerogeny.

By founding at a high altitude the clinics destined for the treatment of external tuberculosis, we thus give the organism the ideal conditions for its defence, since the sun-bath may be indulged in equally well during all seasons of the year.

With this treatment, by means of sun and air, we restore to the organism the vital energy which it had lost. By replacing the skin in its natural surroundings, from which it has been too long separated, it takes a new lease of life, strengthens itself, and regains its numerous and important functions. As Montheuis has written: "It is to nullify completely all recent discoveries in therapeutics and hygiene, to live and act as if the organism only took its force from digestive alimentation. This narrow and insufficient conception of daily hygiene is com-

pletely false. Man cannot live by bread alone; he is fed also by air, which we may call the staff of life as far as breathing is concerned. And this form is applied to the skin as well as to the breathing and digestive organs." The skin is more than an organ of stimulation and elimination; it is above all an organ of absorption, for not only does it furnish to the organism a food as material as the oxygen which it absorbs, but it is by the skin that the organism finds in the sun-bath all those unknown forces which have been until recently unknown to us. It is for this reason that we attribute the reconstitution of the organism to a great extent to the contact of the whole surface of the teguments with the sun and air. *Also we have totally rejected the hiding of tuberculosis in the joints in an apparatus of plaster or kindred matter, as being completely incompatible with the application of the heliotherapeutics.*

As a matter of fact, a plaster apparatus deprives that very portion of the body which most feels the need, of the sun's contact. It results in arresting completely the most important functions of the skin, in anæmia, and above all in maceration of the teguments, a relaxation in the nutriment of all the subjacent tissues and the diminution of organic exchanges, because of the simple fact that these functions are deprived of air and light. The result is atrophy of the muscles and ligaments so greatly to be feared, and which will go so far as the complete disappearance of the muscles, and which the most perfect corset will never be able to replace.

Our first care, therefore, on the arrival of our patients is to remove the apparatus and expose to the air their atrophied limbs and miserable flesh, often bloated with œdema and fungosity.

By systematic and strictly individual training we accustom our patients to live permanently in the fresh air of the high mountains. By degrees, and very carefully, we submit them to the rays of the sun.

As we can daily convince ourselves that a non-observance of the rules of heliotherapeutics which we have formulated may compromise the results of the treatment, we think that it will be of service to our readers if we give them an idea of the treatment, which is the result of long experience, and which has *never played us false*.

Under no pretext must the patient be exposed to the sun on the very day or on the day following his arrival in the mountain. According to the gravity of the case, and the powers of

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