

a picture of a patient with a spotted skin, a sore throat, or some similar surface lesion.

For this reason it seems to me worth while to emphasize in passing, and with the general practitioner chiefly in mind, the dominant role that pain may play in secondary syphilis, viewed from the standpoint of the patient.

As we pass over any accustomed road, features of the landscape, salient enough in themselves, may be unheeded for this reason or that, or for no reason at all, until one day, or two or three days in succession, something calls them sharply to our attention, and we are jarred into a mild astonishment that we have ignored them hitherto. This perhaps has been my experience, and as human experience is rarely unique, and will be repeated in the future, it seemed to me worth while to lay stress on the importance that pain may assume during the course of the second stage of syphilis.

BRIEF NOTES ON SKIN DISEASES IN THE HAWAIIAN TERRITORY—(THE SUN A MODIFYING FACTOR).*

By HARRY E. ALDERSON, M. D., San Francisco.

These few cursory observations were made by the writer during several months' residence in Honolulu (1907) and a later visit (1909), in the course of which time he saw numbers of patients in the various institutions and hospitals and in the private practices of friends. These observations have been corroborated by many letters received from practicing physicians scattered through the various islands of the Hawaiian group. The majority of these physicians, however, are located in or near Honolulu.

The even, balmy climate of Honolulu makes conditions most favorable for all kinds of life from the highest forms down to the bacteria. The sun through its actinic rays undoubtedly has its effect on the skin. These two factors are directly responsible for the manner in which certain dermatoses appear in that clime. That thermal conditions influence more or less all cutaneous eruptions, and very markedly some, cannot be denied. The effect of the extremes of temperature in modifying these phenomena is familiar to all,—the hastening of the appearance of an exanthem by a hot bath is an occurrence of common observation. One effect (and a most important one) of a constant increased temperature with moisture is seen in the ready growth of the various bacteria and other organisms that find epithelial tissues a favorable culture medium. In Honolulu, with her even, warm climate, one would naturally expect this class of cutaneous diseases to be very prevalent,—and such is actually the case, particularly among the poor class. The various grades of staphylococci and impetigo are exceedingly common and often seen in severe form. Among the poor class it is unusual to see an individual without superficial pus lesions somewhere. Ordinary cuts or abrasions, unless thoroughly treated, are almost invariably infected,—and this is not due to dirt alone, because bathing is universally indulged in, and frequently, too. Some of the worst

cases, however, are seen in the dirty individuals who do not take so kindly to water because swimming involves physical exertion. This class comes from the lowest stratum, of course. Besides the ordinary pus infections, scabies and tinea are very common. Naturally, parasites of all kinds thrive.

The prevalence of leprosy is well known. In the Hawaiian Territory there are recorded 764 lepers. Although the unfortunate victims of this disease are seen all over the world, by far the greatest number of cases are found in endemic foci in tropical and semi-tropical climes; for example, India with 97,340, Japan with 40,000, Philippine Islands with 2330, Java 15,000, Indo-China 10,500, United States of Colombia 4152, Argentine Republic 12,000, as against Iceland with only 200, France with 246 and Germany with 28.

The writer saw in Honolulu a surprising number of cases of pompholyx. Whether this condition is due to a bacterium or to some disorder of the sweat glands, or both, the fact remains that the conditions most favorable for its development are present, namely, heat and moisture.

Some dermatoses are modified, not by the heat of the sun but rather by some other effect of its rays. In the Hawaiian Territory senile keratoses, various other preepitheliomatous conditions, basal cell epithelioma and cutaneous neoplasms in general are extremely rare. These conditions are common complications of senility in less sunny climes, and people live to a ripe old age in Hawaii, so it seems reasonable to assume that this scarcity of senile degenerations of the skin is due, in part at least, to the effects of the actinic rays of the sun. Of course, the absence of irritating factors, such as harsh winds, sudden changes in weather, cold and dust, undoubtedly have some influence.

Lupus vulgaris and other cutaneous tuberculides are extremely rare. It cannot be denied that the sun's beneficent rays are a factor here also. In our own California, where so many of the afflicted tuberculous come for relief, cutaneous tuberculosis is rare when compared with its prevalence along the Atlantic seaboard and in places less favored by sunlight throughout the year.

In such a uniformly warm climate as that of Honolulu the skin is naturally more or less hyperemic and moist most of the time. It is due to this state of affairs that the use of the Roentgen ray demands extreme care and vigilance, for under these circumstances radiodermatitis develops very easily. This was proven in a number of unfortunate cases where exposure was not unduly prolonged (as measured by standards elsewhere) and severe burns resulted.

The foregoing, which is intended merely as a brief preliminary report, is based on personal observation of numbers of patients of all kinds and supported by the testimony of physicians from all over the territory, and the following conclusions seem to be justified:

Climatic conditions can greatly modify various diseases involving the skin.

The sun's rays seem to have an inhibitory effect on the development of some dermatoses, notably senile keratoses, precancerous conditions, basal cell epithelioma and other cutaneous neoplasms, and the tuberculides.

* Read at the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the State Society, Sacramento, April, 1910.