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Transcript of the Journal of Benjamin G. Harris

Creator: Benjamin G. Harris

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Transcript by: Helen Rozwadowski, with corrections and edits by Megan Hahn Fraser. The following is a literal transcription, maintaining spelling, punctuation and grammar as written in the original.

Biographical note: Benjamin G. Harris worked as a surgeon's mate aboard the United States Frigate *Philadelphia* from the time of the ship's commissioning in April 1800 to December of the same year. (For more information about the construction and service of the ship, see *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*.) Harris left the ship upon its arrival at Montserrat to become an assistant to local doctor John Carey.

Scope and content: Harris's journal entries record observations of diseases and the medical and surgical treatments of sailors during the ship's cruise to the West Indies. He assists with treatments of common sailors' ailments such as dysentery, scurvy and venereal disease, and also attends to injuries suffered in the course of work aboard ship. The entries after Harris settles in Montserrat describe his care of the local population, including a number of slaves, and become more sporadic, ending in 1803.

The remainder of the volume was used as a letterbook by Harris and others, containing retained drafts of letters describing the death of Harris's friend, Rev. Howell Powell, and the settlement of Powell's estate. Because many of the letters have text that is obliterated in some way, they are not transcribed here.

Some observations taken onboard of the U. S. Frigate Philadelphia During her Cruise in the year 1800 -- and after leaving her by Benjn G. Harris Surgeon's Mate

Some observations &c

The Frigate Philadelphia is a vessel of about thirteen hundred Tons carrying 44 Guns and 400 men. Her keel was laid in the autumn of 1798 and she was ready for the sea in April 1800.

She was built with well seasoned timber and by able workmen. Her men were all shipped in good health excepting about 30 who caught the venereal disease after they had shipped or who had it slightly when they shipped. This disease however being recent among a large majority of that number soon yielded to the power of mercury. The Provision of the Ship was taken on board in the month of March. It consisted of good New England Beef and Pork, Beans, potatoes, Rice, Butter, Cheese, Flour of Wheat and Fish; all equal if not superior to any provision in the American Navy. The water of the ship was taken out of the dock at Philadelphia in March and remained very cool during the whole passage to St. Kitts, so cool as to be painful to the Finger when immersed in it, and in which the Thermometer of Farenheit stood at 45 in all April. This water being very turbid when taken on board deposited a large quantity of filth sediment when that operation was over it was perfectly agreeable to the taste.

The spirit served out to the ships crew was from Jamaica and tolerably good, but few of the officers drank it, having laid in Brandy in their own stores.

The vessels used in cookery were Iron, Tin or Wooden (I mean for the crew) and them kept well cleaned. The Boilers were made of cast iron entirely except the cock for drawing off the soup, which was of Brass.

I should have observed with respect to the ships water, that in each large cask when filled there was added about the quarter of a pound of Lime, but for what purpose I know not.

In this condition the Frigate Philadelphia on the 5th day of April unmoored in order to drop down to Newcastle to take a few more guns and provisions before proceeding to the sea; but could get no further than Miflin Fort. On the 22nd day of March I made the first observation on board of our ship with Farenheits Thermometer. In the cockpit was my birth The Thermometer stood at 50.9 often in the morning an on the Gun Deck at 45 and continued nearly at that till the end of March. About the time that we dropped down to Mud Fort from Apl 1st. The Thermometer stood at 60 upon the Gun Deck generally and two or 3 degrees higher in the cock pit where was a windrail, & a ventilator; but several Tapers constantly burning there, besides several persons breathing these contributed to increase the temperature of that small place.

We are now at Mud Fort or Miflin Fort and a great number of our crew are afflicted with a vomitting & purging, exactly similar though not quite so violent as, The Genuine Cholera Morbus. There has lately been much wind, and the River water has become very turbid, in consequence thereof. To this I attribute this change in the health of our crew; as

I am told that this water always proves a laxative to persons unaccustomed to drink it. I am the more inclined to this opinion, as no possible exception can be made to the provision &c of the ship.

There has been a number of venereal cases under my care since entering the ship, most of which are constantly attended with a discharge from the Urethra of a true Gonorrhoeal nature. This conforms with the opinion I have ever held, That the Lues venerea and Gonorrhoea are not the same, but that the former may produce the latter, but the latter does never degenerate into the Lues venerea unless the contagion of the Lues be applied.

9 Left Mifflin Fort this day. During our stay, here The Thermometer stood generally from 60 to 65. & Our crew much distressed with the vomiting and purging above mentioned. In attempting to cross the Bar below the Fort our Ship got fast aground. All hands were immediately employed in unloading her of her guns and provisions. It was in this place that our ships crew was extremely distressed with this mild cholera morbus ('tho' in some cases very severe) which is no doubt caused, or at least aggravated by the turbid River water, rendered so by the windy weather which we have lately experienced and do now.

1800

April 9

The temperature of the weather has been very moderate pleasant, 'tho' windy.

In some cases this complaint takes on the form of genuine cholera morbus, in others that of Dysentery and often that of a Bilious Diarrhoea, and in some cases attended with fever. The Diagnostics, were an excessive thirst, very constant, and prostration of strength more or less according to the violence of the symptoms. The ship as yet supplied with fresh provisions from Phila. I have said that in several case this Disease was severe; It was particularly so in one case. It was that of Joseph Richardson, a midshipman on board, about 30 years of age. In this case there was a genuine cholera morbus with great prostration of strength and excessive thirst. It terminated in an inflammation of the Bowels, followed by a Diabetes, and it was the last of Apl before he recovered his health.

11

A high water this day our ship was afloat, after being evacuated of all her great guns, shot, provisions & wood.

The Cholera (the now prevailing complaint) has nearly traversed the whole ships crew, officers not excepted. When assistance is given timely, it is generally, easily cured by evacuants, succeeded by astringents with opium, but astringents alone has never answered as a remedy.

The River water has become clear, but notwithstanding the Disease still prevails.

17

Set sail from our anchoring ground, below the Fort, and again our Keel touched the bottom, on a small shoal opposite Chester but were afloat again the first flood tide.

I am informed by an old seaman that it is the custom in some Island (I forget where) to bury Scorbutic patients up to the neck in fresh dug earth every day; and with very great success.

19

Yesterday we dropped anchor at Marcus Hook. Today the cholera appears to diminish amongst the crew. Tho' relapses from exposure to cold, as night watching, are very frequent. The weather at present very mild with southerly breezes.

24

Left Newcastle at 8 AM and anchored off Bombay Hook where we remained only two days and then proceeded to sea.

27

Lost sight of the Light house at Cape Henlopen this day at 11 A. M. We have been now three days drinking the ships water. There is very little of the Cholera at present among us. I am told that this complaint is very common to persons unused to drinking the River water, but it is never so violent as our crew have been.

[May 5]

Many of our crew complain of excoriations of the membrane of the mouth. I believe it is customary for Bakers to put a considerable quantity of potash in their bread before baking it. Whether this causes those excoriations, or whether it is caused by the Lime which was mixed with the water when filling I know not; but I am rather inclined to subscribe to the latter opinion.

I am informed by a gentleman of credit that he has been completely cured of a Gonorrhoe by taking Mercury internally; and without any injections or external applications. This is Contrary to what I have ever believed on the subject. Although it is firmly supported by the followers of John Hunter.

May 10

The Thermometer since 1st Inst has stood in the cockpit from 75 to 80 and on the Gun Deck from 70 to 75. Our crew are getting more healthy; But wounds and other accidents are very frequent yet, owing I suppose to a greater part of the crew being inexperienced on board of ship. On the 1st day of this month; two of the sailors got very much injured thro' negligence or inexperience. The one while ramming home a caterege in one of the great guns, had his arm unfortunately shot away; an amputation was immediately necessary; which was performed above the Cubit by Surgeon Champney. In one minute after this another sailor, by the bursting of a powder horn had both his hands much lacerated with the loss of one of his little fingers close to the Metacarpal bone. These however both recovered in about 6 weeks from the accident. At 6 P.M. this evening Reuben Hosford

had the misfortune to fall from the Main Top upon the Quarter Deck. He fractured his right Humerus and received a violent concussion of the Brain, succeeded by hemorrhage from his right Ear and a great derangement of the sensorial faculty.

23

I have ever held it as an opinion that venereal chancres always make their first appearance upon, what are called, absorbing surfaces, such as, the Lips, Glans penis, &c But I have seen several cases on board of this ship that tend to an opposite opinion. Frequent applications have been made to the Surgeons for the cure of ulcers on the body of the penis quite unconnected with, or rather at a distance from, the Glans penis or the frenum, which appear at first to arise entirely from filthiness and negligence in keeping the parts clean; But appearances are too often deceitful. These cases were too frequently obstinate and would yield to no applications, nor internal medicines except a regular course of Mercury, which never failed to produce a speedy cure of the ulcers.

25

Arrived this day at The Island of St. Kitts and anchored in Bassatere road. I had previously thought of wearing Flannel next to my skin during the whole cruise in these West Indies but found it extremely disagreeable thus far and took it off. Although the climate here is no hotter than that of our own is, in summer, yet the vicissitudes are much more frequent and indisposition oftener follows on that account. But the wearing of Flannel, altho' it might probably ward off the impending blow from that cause, yet the consequence of wearing it would in my opinion be as disagreeable I mean debility. The heat of the weather in those climate, being equally as great as any in the world, which (heat) being one of the most powerful stimulants; and aided in its effects by the stimulus caused by the minute and numerous points in the Flannel upon the skin, produces an unceasing and superabundant discharge of perspirable matter.

27

Set sail in company with The Adams Frigate on a cruise before Guadaloupe. Our crew being in a very good state of health.

June 11th

One of our officers I. M. discharged about 4 foot of a Tape worm, with which he had for some time been afflicted. This evacuation of the worm was produced by taking some of a Quack medicine called Hamiltons Lozenges; which I suppose to be nothing but Calomel made up with some kind of farinaceous substance and scented in order to enhance the value of it. I. M. has a florid complexion, good appetite & Digestion, and every appearance of unimpaired health. He has discharged some portions of the T. worm before, by the same medicine, but could not effect the removal of the whole animal.

June 23rd

Genuine venereal chancres are such as occur on the Glans penis, Lips, &c on what are called absorbing surfaces that are succeeded by Buboës. But what are those ulcers called that are found on the body of the Penis at a distance from the Glans, and that will not admit of being cured, except by Mercury, and that cause inguinal Buboës? cannot they be

termed chancres also. I have seen several instances of these kinds of ulcers among the crew of the Philadelphia.

June 20

Historians say that the atmosphere in this country abounds with an acid (I suppose the nitrous acid) which speedily causes metals to rust; But this effect upon metal is well known not to be peculiar to the West Indies alone. My watch has become tarnished and steel buttons rusty in the Chesapeake Bay in the United States; and persons of respectability have informed me that the same thing occurs in European voyages.

July 20

Herpetic Eruptions are now very rife among our crew, a subsistence of three months only upon Salted provisions has evidently had the effect of producing this disease. One of the Landsmen J. P. resided on shore about two weeks on fresh provisions, and by that means was freed from the disease; but a return on board of ship (consequently a return to Salt meat) reproduced the Herpetic eruptions.

The Cashew nut, which grows here, is an infallible remedy for any kind of Herpes. It produces a considerable inflammation of its own, when rubbed on the part affected; but after two or three days the inflammation subsides and a desquamation of the cuticle takes place; leaving the parts tender but sound and healthy. I have given this corrosive sublimate a fair trial upon myself, but a cure was not effected.

1800

July 30

Historians have widely erred, in my opinion, in their description of the climate of the West Indies. It has been represented by many, that the air is much colder in the night here than it is in the United States in the summer so as to require a much greater quantity of clothing. A Residence of considerable time in these windward Islands convinces me that the heat of the weather is not greater here than in the United States, neither is the difference greater, between the air of the day and night than it is in the United States, I mean in the summer season.

I am informed by a captain of a Merchant Ship that he has cured himself of a Gonorrhoea virulenta by taking twenty drops of Turlingtons Balsam twice a day. Would not Balsam Capivi and most of the other Balsams operate in the same manner being all Diuretics, and curing the disease (I suppose) by that means.

Augt 15

Perhaps exercise operates more against producing corpulence in swine than in any other animals. I have frequently observed a small Dog, playing with a particular Pig on board. The Dog increased apace both in stature and corpulence while the Pig was daily decreasing, altho' it had an excellent appetite and appeared well in every respect. There were many other pigs of the same age on board, that grew and fattened very fast. Hogs are, I believe, the most indolent animals on earth, excepting the Sloth; and it is probable

that a state of indolence induced in any animal might be followed by an increase in corpulence and probably in stature.

1800

Aug 20

During the last three months Bilious Remittents have been very rife on board of us. The Dysentery also has been troublesome. Almost every case of the above complaints have been attended with local determinations to the Lungs, with considerable cough and pain in the Breast that in many case required several bleedings.

Sept. 1st

Are not persons, afflicted with Scurvy, sooner salivated than persons in health? It is hinted at, by some authors, and not without great probability. Several Scorbutic patients now on Board whose mouths indicated a great tendency to Scurvy, having had occasion to take common mercurial purges of Jalop and Calomel) which operated very well, by the bowels, in every case, yet they become completely salivated, considerable swelling of the parotid, submaxillary and sub-lingual glands, with a great increase of their secretions; Tumid and spongy gums. Frequent hemorrhages from them, and many ulcers in them and on the Tongue.

In Scurvy the Mouth Gums and salivary glands are, I suppose, in a state of preternatural excitability consequently sialagogue medicines are more certain of their operations, and that even if administered in very small quantities.

4

At 9 o'clock P.M. I saw, for the first time, a nocturnal Rain bow; caused by the moons rays falling upon drops of Rain. It showed no variety of colours, similar to that caused by the Sun, but was of the same form and exhibited a white appearance.

This morning the moon was full; The wind is extremely variable, the sea rolls in mountainous swells, and the sky is clear. These are said to be precursors of Hurricanes, so dreadful and destructive to the works of both Nature and of art. Lat 17 56

5

The weather turned out squally last night, and our fears of a Hurricane subsided at the commencement of a steady breeze and smooth sea, this morning.

The following method of preserving Lime Juice is practised, and strongly recommended by Capn Stephen Decatur

Take any quantity of the acid and boil it in an Earthen vessel 'till one fourth is evaporated; taking care to scum it with a wooden Ladel as long as any appears on the surface of the acid. After one fourth is evaporated, it must be removed from the fire and strained through a Flannel cloth. One half pint of Brandy is to be added to every gallon of the acid, thus prepared, which is then to be sealed up in bottles for use

The captain asserts from experience, that this method of preparing the acid, renders it capable of being preserved several years without being unfit for use, or at all impaired.

The addition of the oil of olives, would no doubt more effectually exclude the air. And certainly the more the acid is concentrated, the better it is preserved and the more convenient for travellers.

Philosophers affirm that water cannot be supported in a tube open at the lower end, higher than thirty two feet from the surface of the Earth. I made an experiment on the 12th September, to windward of Guadaloupe; which destroyed this opinion in my mind, altogether

1800

Sept 12

I took a glass tube about a foot in length, and filled it with water. I then sealed it an one end and sent it up, by means of the signal Halliard to the Fore top Gallant Royal mast head. It remained there a few minutes and then it was hauled down, but not a drop of water had escaped, altho one end was open.

The Thermometer generally stands at 83 in the morning and evening, and 85 or 6 at noon; upon the Gun Deck in a cool place.

13

At one oclock P. M. The Thermometer stood at 86 on the Gun Deck it being a clear day. I then exposed it the rays fo the sun (but not in the wind) for one hour. The Mercury arose to only 120 degrees.

15

The Mercury standing at 85 as usual, at 2 P.M. I exposed the Thermometer to the sun beams for one hour, the Mercury arose to 125 in a calm place. I then covered the bulb with black cloth an in one hours time the Mercury was up to 150. Tho' the degrees could scarcely be seen on account of large drops of water having settled on the inside of the glass case owing I suppose to the increase of evaporation.

18

I am informed that, The cinders of Tobacco is very good in the cure of Venereal Chancres, when sprinkled upon them. This information I obtained from an Italian seaman on board. Who informed me that it was a very common application to chancres and a very successful one among his countrymen.

1800

Sept 25

The number of sick on the Surgeon's List is nearly thirty this day and the whole of them are Pulmonary complaints or the Scurvy, or both conjoined. The Pulmonary complaints are remarkably obstinate, and require copius Bleedings and other evacuations.

It is more than probable that this is the most unhealthy season in this West Indian climate. I mean the Hurricane months.

Octr 15

A Disease very similar to the Influenza, is very prevalent on board of our Ship at present. The weather has not been remarkably bad; neither has any other circumstances occurred that might render a common cold so rife, This renders it more probable that the Disease is contagious. It commences with Sneezing; a slight inflammation of the top of the Trachea, succeeded by a cough; a stoppage of Respiration thro' the nostrils; with a coryza and headach.

17

Yesterday and to day has been remarkably stormy weather; attended with much rain, which has evidently increased this Influenza. The moon will change tomorrow. The Thermometer stands generally at eighty four in a pleasant place on the gun Deck. Tho' the surface of the body for several weeks past has sensibly perceived a lesser degree of heat; or a cooler temperature of weather.

25

At present there are about twenty patients on the Surgeons list and three fourths of them are terminations, or rather aggravations, of the disease above mentioned (The Influenza) The Coughs are in many cases violent, attended with considerable Diarrhoea and pain in the Frontal Sinusses; and to this is joined, five times out of ten, a troublesome Tenesmus with an aggravating thirst. This attendant Diarrhoea we suffer to continue in moderation but it does not afford that relief from the troublesome cough which we have a right to expect according to the general operations of nature. As the pulse is in almost every instance very frequent small and weak, tho' sometimes tense it seldom is in our power to afford relief by Bloodletting. Our most successful medicines have been, Cathartics in the beginning; mild Laxatives and antimonials afterwards, with Blisters, succeeded by cooling nitrous draughts, squills & opiates.

Novr 1st

Since going into St. Pierres (Martinico) our crew have been quite free from the scurvy and all except one man who is yet ill speedily recovered who were then affected with that complaint; altho' our stay there was so short a time as four days; our arrival there being on the twenty seventh of September last and our departure on the first of October.

The speedy recovery of those Scorbutic patients is more astonishing, because they were not allowed fresh provision but one day, if we except what little, they could purchase themselves, from the Negroes, which indeed was inconsiderable.

2

The wind has been extremely variable for several days, blowing however from the westward, commonly. About four days ago we were as far north as Lat 20° 2' and the Thermometer stood at 82 the greatest part of the last twenty four hours. This however has

been the standard for four weeks last past. But to our senses the temperature of the weather has been or has appeared to be much lower.

During the months of August and September last (i.e.) the hurricane months the weather has been and perhaps has been the case every year uncommonly squally and variable, frequent calms; sometimes an obscure and clouded atmosphere; at other times it is clear and transparent; frequent and heavy swells of the sea and extremely variable winds.

5 Last night at 7 o'clock died James Wilson, a soldier with the Scurvy combined with an affection of the Lungs. He was the only person on board that did not recover from this disease after we went into Martinico.

1800

Novr 6

At 10 o'clock last night Died Stephen Bond a Landsman with a Dysentery, combined with a pulmonary inflammation. He expired under a hemorrhage of red blood from the Rectum and considerable irritation of the Lungs with a very troublesome cough.

12

This morning at 4 A.M. Died James Artfield of a violent Remittent Bilious Fever attendend through its whole course, with considerable derangement of the Censorium Commune.

26

A 4 o'clock this evening died William Griffiths (the Sail Makers Mate) of the Scurvy, attended with considerable fever and cough.

Decr 3

John Graham (Landsman) a Black man has had a violent attack of Pneumonia, is now a convalescent. He was bled five times. (amounting to about fifty six ounces). Took one Mercl Bolus of about twelve grains of Calomel. The common powders of Nitre and Emetic Tartar freely and drank three pounds of the Seneka Tea, during the continuance of the disease. His mouth is now swelled & inflamed, teeth loose, Salivary glands considerably affected and has every other symptom of a complete salivation. On the first day of the disease he took the Mercl Bolus and on the fourteenth his mouth became sore. Does not this corroborate the assertion of the celebrated Doctor Barton of Philadelphia. "That the Radix Seneko Salivates when taken freely, as soon and as freely as Mercury."

The Thermometer, standing in its usual place on the Gun Deck. The Mercury descended no lower than seventy nine, the whole of last month. The Surgeons sick list has amounted to thirty in number each day. The month of November is said to be the most unhealthy in the year in these West Indies.

10

This Day by permission of the Captain & Surgeon I left the Frigate Philadelphia to live in Mt Serrat, as assistant to Doctr John Carey at the rate of £250 per annum & Board.

Dec 15

This Day I agreed to reside assistant to Dr. Carey at the rate of £250 per annum & board at his Table. Commenced duty.

Same day occurred a case of wounded Head. William Haynes Sailor in the Worsford Privateer was shot thro' the head yesterday morning in an action with a French Privateer. The ball entered just about the center of the Forehead, thro' the Os Frontes and passed out just behind the right meatus auditorius externus. We Dressed the wound, bled him, gave him Salts to open his bowels, and afterwards nitre and the Bark. He took nourishment and diluting drinks, was sensible at intervals. The Discharge from the wounds was very great and offensive. It came as well from both Ears and his right Eye as from the Orifices made by the shot. The Discharge was sometimes portions of the Brain alone, and sometimes ichourous skin matter. His pulse was full and slow & his skin hot for the first week. Afterwards it became weak and frequent. He died Decr 26th. the 14th day after the accident. A large quantity of water ran out from the cavity of the skull just before he died. His urine was discharged constantly of a Saffron colour and in large quantities. No Fungus excressences made their appearance from the Brain.

1800

Decr 25

This day three severe shocks of Earthquake were felt here. The first happened at ½ past 11 oclock A. M. The second at ½ past 3 P.M. and the third at ten minutes past 7 P. M. The weather was rainy and squally yesterday and the day before.

26 & 7

These two days it has been remarkably windy & cloudy with some Rain. rather cool. On the 25th. it was cloudy and in the evening there were several showers of Rain.

The year 1800 ends with Rainy and windy weather at the same time the temperature cool and pleasant. The Thermometer standing generally at between 74 and 82 in a cool and moderate situation.

Gonorrhoea virulenta I find to much easier & sooner removed by means of Mercurial alteratives than by Injection.

Ends the year 1800.

[1801]

An express arrived this day from St. Kitts to the President Making known That an attack was intended upon this Island by the French of Guadaloup. The Military and Militia were immediatly put & kept under arms day and night till farther accounts. Dispatches were sent to Antigua, St. Kitts & Martinico for Troops but none came except 50 from Martinico.

The Militia excused from duty more than once a week.

This day I sowed some seed of the Popao Somnifera and two seed of the American Plumb. The Mercury in Fahrenheits Thermometer stood at 142 in the sun. only 82 in the shade. The day being perfectly calm and free from clouds.

Feby 2nd

I was present and assisted this day in performing the operation of Trepanning. The patient received a blow from one of the wings of the wind mill, three days ago; was immediately seized with vomitting, but no other symptom of concussion or compression of the Brain at that time. He was bled and took nitrous powders. He remained well untill about noon yesterday, when he was affected with stupor a slow and intermitting pulse and with a considerable dilation of the pupils of the Eyes. Upon a second examination of the head no determined spot could be fixed upon for making a perforation, not the least external injury could be seen yet it was evident that the Brain was compressed, and that the operation gave the only chance of preserving the patients life.

By laying the cranium bare along the Parietal bone and Squammous Suture a fissure was discovered very near the suture. The Trepine was applied and a considerable quantity of Serum and blood was discharged from between the Meninges of the Brain which gave the patient some relief. The wound was dressed S. A. but the symptoms of oppression increasing the patient died about ten hours after the operation perfectly comatose. Upon dissection it appeared that there was a considerable extent of fracture of the Occipital bone and the Mastoid process of the Temporal and extravasations of blood in several places.

I recollect of seeing a man (whose name I forget) on board U. S. Frigate Philadelphia, who was visited at every Lunar revolution, with an eruption of red blood from his navel. The man was healthy in general. But was very tall and slender.

21

This day Doct Carey and myself performed the operation of amputation of the Femur upon a patient the property of J. R. Frye. A Sphacelation of the whole foot & part of the leg had taken place. The cause was a Fracture of the Leg very low down from a fall and which was concealed for 6 days after the injury when mortification had taken place.

1801

Doctor Carey and myself Trepanned a little Negro of Mr Musgraves aged about 3 years. She fell from a flight of steps, down upon the stone pavement. the distance about six feet and fractured the Os Frontis just above the orbit of the right Eye, convulsions immediately ensued which did not leave her untill the pressure of the extravasated blood was removed from the Brain. She was vomitted, and put into the warm bath but without affect, the nervous system remained in a deranged state untill the Trepine was applied. The antiphlogistic regimen was strictly adhered to and purging & Sudorific medicines frequently administered to prevent and remove stupor and Fever which sometimes came on. The cicatrix was perfect in three months from the day of the operation.

Oct 1801 Assisted in Dissecting James Irish supposed to have been poisoned. The stomach and Intestines appeared to have considerable degree of inflammation. The concave surface of the Liver was of a leaden colour, the convex surface was natural. The Gall Bladder small and nearly empty. The mesenteric vessels very Turgid with Red Blood. there was an effusion about two pounds of pure serum in the cavity of the Abdomen. The Urinary Bladder was searched for a considerable while before it was found. It was much contracted and without a drop of urine. This led to an examination of the kidneys. They were taken out and found to be of an enormous size, weighing at least sixteen ounces each no calculi however were seen upon dissecting them. The Ureters were in a natural state; The Pelvis of Kidneys no way distended.

This patient was affected with *Fever of the common bilious type, but accompanied with no local pains in the loins; he was upon the recovery when he left Town to remove into the country for a few days. Was seized with despondency, and nervous debility, accompanied with considerable serous effusions into the cellular membrane.

A Mulatto woman, the property of Mr N. B. Daly died of a Genuine Typhus Gravior. Several days before death she was in a complete Ptyalism 'tho' no sialagogue medicines of the Mercurial Kind were administered. Does this often occur in the low states of Nervous Fevers?

December 1801. Two men were preparing to blow up a Rock. The Powder accidentally took fire before they were aware. The explosion was very great and wounded both severely. The arm of one was so much torn as to render amputation necessary. The other had one arm blown away, the other arm badly wounded, and his face almost torn to pieces but what appeared to be the most dangerous wound was in the abdomen. The first joint of one of the fingers was forced into the abdomen in contact with the Intestines, it however was extracted and soon healed. The other wounds soon put on a favorable appearance and healed also.

*His cure was attempted by Mercurials, largely administered both by the mouth and by inunction.

April 10th. A Negro boy of Nicholas Hill received a kick from one of the mules just above the orbit of the right Eye that penetrated through the Os Frontis. He was trepanned for it and done very well. No symptoms whatever came on indicative of compression of the Brain either before or after the operation without doubt the injury extended no farther than the Frontal Sinus. The wound healed without exfoliation.

May 21st. A man, the property of James Willock in the year 1800 received a blow upon the occiput not many days after an abscess was formed in the integuments of a considerable size, it was opened and pure pus was discharged in a large quantity. The incision healed all to a very small point which continued open, and through which matter constantly flowed. When this discharge was not copious the patient was in great pain and vice versa. In this situation he remained until the above date when upon examination it

was found that the probe passed through the integuments and occipital bone down to the Dura mater -- The operation of trepanning was advised as the only chance of affording relief, the patient consented and it was performed, and a large quantity of matter immediately discharged. The piece of bone taken out was three fourths of an inch thick, the cure went on well.

1802 January 8th

Extracted the Placenta from a woman called Joan the Property of Thos Meade Esq. The os internum being very much cont[r]acted on account of the Foetus having been delivered at least twelve hours before. It was still born. No fever of consequence come on afterward.

During the months of December, January, February, March and April last, the winds have been almost constantly from the Northward and the weather consequently cool. Since the beginning of April but not before Pleurisies have been extremely rife, (among the Negroes especially) and so inflammatory that two or three bleedings were always necessary to reduce the pulse sufficiently. Children have suffered very much from this inflammatory disposition of the Atmosphere; from the relaxed and debilitated state of their Lungs it affects them in the form of Tussis Convulsiva or Hooping Cough which remains for a considerable time very obstinate. It is now August, and this cough still remains nearly as violent as in the former months, all persons under fifteen have felt more or less the severity of it upon the Lungs, yet few die with it in proportion to the number that fall under its attack. We have tried Bleeding, purging, Blistering, warm bathing, and have exhausted the whole tribe of Expectorants but without effect; am now making use of Bark and the Cold Bath (keeping the bowels very loose) and the change of air. This treatment has proved more beneficial than any thing hitherto tried.

The case of a Negro Driver on the Estate of E. Parsons, Esq. – In making an exertion a portion of the Ileum came down through the Abdominal ring. He had been troubled with a rupture of the same side, of course this attack was disregarded for a day or two. It however became very painful on the third day and assistance was called for. The usual endeavors of every kind both surgical & medical was made use of, but without good effect. The abdomen at length became very tumid, no stools for five days, hickup came on and cold sweats, extremities cold, and pulse extremely quick & weak. The patient had been previously advised to undergo this operation, and was warned of the inevitable consequences of delay, but was obstinate in his refusal to submit; at length about the close of the fifth day from the descent of the Hernia, when the above unfavorable symptoms came on, he agreed to have the operation performed for the Bubonecele in order to reduce the Intestine, It was done immediately by Doctor Daniell assisted by myself; the Intestine reduced, & the lips of the wound brought together were retained by stiches & adhesive plaster, when we left him to rest, soon after which he had copius stools from which he received great ease. I should have observed that in the Hernial sack there was found at least a pint of Serum, tinged with blood, and that the portion of Intestine down was not larger than a common sized Hens Egg. His pulse continued very weak & fluttering for some days, after which the wound began to suppurate idly, appetite became good and he did well.

1803

In the months of January, February and March of the present year, the weather was very dry and calm of course very warm in the day. The Thermometer for the most part standing at 88 at Noon and untill 3 of the clock in the afternoon. In proportion as the day was warm & calm, the exhalations from the Sea became more abundant, and consequently the dew at Night was more considerable, which refrigerating the system, as it were, rendered it very unfit to receive so suddenly the darting rays of the blazing Mareidian Sun, on the following day. Whether this state of weather was the causes of several cases (eight or ten) of Malignant Fever (most of which proved fatal) or not, it is uncertain; plain it is however, that most of them were attended with considerable derangement of the Brain, and all with inflammation of the Eyes. Two or three foreigners who had lately arrived, died in the course of 72 hours after the first attack of this Fever. The Natives who survived were a long time recovering. Those who died had the disease 12, 14, or 16 day before death closed the scene. Hemorrhages occurred in every case which proved fatal, evidently shewign a dissolved state of the blood. These who died became of a livid or yellow color, immediately before or after death.

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