An Essay on The Therapeutics of West Africa

by

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West African Therapeutics.

General Introduction.

My object in this essay, is to dwell chiefly upon those peculiar methods of treatment of diseases common in this part of West Africa, and the knowledge of diseases among natives who have had no English education. In doing so, I am venturing so far as I know on an untried path. From boyhood, I have thought much on this subject, which primarily led me to the study of Medicine in London & Edinburgh.

One constantly hears in this part of the world, of marvels wrought by uneducated & illiterate men of achievements before which the latest discoveries of science pale, of successes in medicine where a thoroughly well-educated physician has failed.

To be able to investigate these methods and bring them to the light of the scientific world, is an object well worth the ambition of any student. My aim is high; I am only on the threshold of my life's work, and therefore, the work of which I now write, is really yet
to be done. Difficulties unthought of have to be surmounted, among which may be reckoned the almost insurmountable prejudice of the men we have to deal with, refusing to tell what they know; the absence of travelling facilities, the variety of the language spoken in the various districts: and further, the jealous secrecy with which they conceal the art is so great, and the mass of information obtained is generally so unreliable, that it is sometimes difficult to know when one has arrived at the whole truth.

For these and other reasons, the range of my inquiries at present must be limited to Sierra Leone and its neighbourhood and also to Lagos, with the Yoruba country of which she is the Chief port, these places being spheres where I have lived and practiced.
On Medicine Men.

It is generally believed in Europe that these so-called "Medicine Men" are the physicians of Nigeria (i.e., countries within the area formed by the Gambia and Niger rivers.) But this term as used in these countries is more applicable to Charm-makers and Wonder-workers than to healers of diseases. Thus Maestalche, Cooke could be great "Medicine Men" in London.

As all wonderful achievements are ascribed to "Medicines" — "the power of herbs" — the idea became confused. Moreover, priests being in a way wiser than the bulk of the people — their dupes — are often also the physicians and controller of evil spirits to the people. Most diseases are attributed to the evil influences of some persons or deities.

Indeed, in no case of sudden death, or of severe illness or death of young persons is it not attributed by the priests to the evil hands or "evil eye" of foes. Thus it comes to pass that stories are often woven to fit in with the supposed cause or causes of the plain symptoms. The "Medicine Man" work to counteract these evil influences.

But there are native "doctors" professionally so who, though very superstitious do not rank with the "Medicine Men".
Many resort to the "Medicine Man" to unravel mysteries, to unearth secrets, and discover a thief. As masters of their arts, the results are often very wonderful, even to an educated man, and considering the amount of faith reposed in them by the people at large, many things are accepted without question; but many instances of collusion and artful dealings have been discovered. But the readiness with which a wide knowledge of new things must be placed to their credit.

But even amongst the doctors, we have found out by experience that scarcely any good medicines worthy of the name are obtainable from those so-called Medicine Men, or dealers in medicines, as distinguished from those described above; but men in other walks of life, as farmers, artisans, &c., have become acquainted perhaps with one or two genuine drugs. I myself know of one who is a saddler by trade, like his father before him, from whom also he learnt a good deal of the virtues of certain herbs. Such men as a rule try rather to conceal their knowledge than to talk upon it. I can never obtain satisfactory reasons why they should endeavour so much to hide their knowledge. They delight to pronounce their calling and profession, and
would only render therapeutic aid to friends or to the earnest solicitation of friends, to other, but with so much of - to me - unnecessary secrecy. Their range of knowledge very limited, every thing has to be retained in the memory. The people being unlettered, a host of needless adjuncts which always find a place in every preparation may sometimes unfortunately crowd out of the overburthensw memory of our physician. The principal patent vegetable is his Receipt. The art is transmitted generally from father to son, and may thus become lost when the son happens to be worthless.

Very few intercommunication of knowledge between friends, but more commonly rather an interchange of knowledge. Say A who is a Carpenter knows a never-failing remedy for rheumatism, may impart the same to B of the same or another craft in exchange for the latter's secret specific for phthisis.

Incantation & mysterious airs seem inseparable from the proceedings of our Medicine men and doctors: all unsuccessful attempts are placed on the credit of witchcraft. And as to fees - it has been found, that men of real knowledge charge the patient a great deal less than mere charlatans do.
On Medicine

The field to be explored under this head is almost unlimited, but the barriers and difficulties great and only be surmounted by gradual processes involving almost the labours of a lifetime.

It is a striking fact that very few mineral agents are used in medicine here. Such important agents as Iron, Mercury, Arsenic etc are unknown; but those of the alkaline, as Soda, Potassium, Calcium are used largely in the form of Chlorides and Carbonates. Indeed, one often hears that they use no mineral agents whatever, not knowing that the salts they use have metallic base. Leaves, barks, roots, are chiefly used. No special period is observed for gathering them, they are sought after only when wanted, every doctor is thus necessarily a botanist— as far as the knowledge goes— (This rule however is not without an exception. Those leaves, roots & barks that are mostly often sought after may be found exposed for sale in the market in a dry condition and generally sold by old women.) In every case therefore of the treatment of disease, the doctor first demands his "bush money"— a sort of retaining fee, which is supposed to be spent in obtaining the ingredients required for the medicine. It necessarily follows that at one time the drugs display a remarkable degree of potancy which is often alarming; sometimes,
fatal, whilst at other times, it is comparatively inert which undoubtedly is due to the fact that no regard is paid to the season most advantageous for selecting the herbs: added to this is the fact that no regulated dose exists, the individual is to drink as much as he or she can, of the infusion or decoction.

In a country where a formal scientific investigation is unknown, how cause the men to know the properties of the herbs they select for remedies and the parts of it to be used? To this question, no satisfactory answer could be given. One is told, the discovery is handed down from their fathers. This is but removing the difficulty, one generative step that answering the question. This however is true no doubt, of a host of medicines used all the world over. Others would tell of a remarkable dream while they had, in which they were directed to try the effect of a particular herb in the cure of their ailment, and this advice followed, is attended with the most satisfactory result. In a number of cases, the resemblance which the disease is supposed to bear to the herb in shape or color made to select it for the remedy of that disease. Thus the seed of a certain fruit, the shape of which is suggestive of the spleen, not much unlike it in colour, named by the Yoruba Agbá (the name also in an enlarged spleen) is the most potent remedy known here that is used for that disease in this country.
Similarly, trial is made of certain herbs from association of ideas in the name they bear. "Jatòpe" i.e. "Be quiet" is the name of a certain parasite. It is used in the vomitings of pregnancy as well as for the inconvenience caused by excessive flatulent restlessness and movements. It is to keep the patient quiet. This to my knowledge has been attested with remarkably fine factual results. Again, an herb would be chosen or selected for the case of a disease because it abounds in regions where that disease is prevalent. A large number of herbs are used in this empirical way in their Traditional Pharmacopeia.

It is remarkable however how in many points their Therapeutics agree with those of scientific Medicine. Very often the herb is identical e.g. where the cotton plant (Gossypium herbaceum) is the chief ingredient of an ointment. Palm oil used freely in "palmaeare" of phthisical patients with beneficial results, thanks for similar cool liver oil generally in their nutritive properties. Not the trade palm oil known in Europe, but a much purer form, made for home Consumption. Narcotics & Opiates are well known amongst the natives of this region. Narcotizing for unlawful purposes is said to exist, but it has not come within my personal Knowledge. However the use of Anodyne however has come within the knowledge of the writer as a bag.
The following narrative will show.

It was a victim of a severe irritable bleeding ulcer which rendered night terrible both to himself and the household. It was bleeding and painful to an excessive degree. One morning, after one of these sleepless nights, a friend of his brother called, and the tale of unceasing war his sympathetic ear by the sleepless sufferer and the distressed parents. He directed him to gather a certain herb, make a decoction of it, and wash the ulcer with it every morning and evening. His directions were followed, and both the pain and bleeding were stopped as if by magic at the very first application, and what is more, the ulcer healed rapidly. This happened 27 years ago in one of the far interior towns; he was not a boy then, but there is no doubt of his recognizing the same plant whenever an opportunity offers of travelling in the interior for the purpose of research. The name and N. Order can then be determined.

Astringents and purgatives enter largely into all internal medicaments; patients are never pleased except well purged. There is another method of treatment used in these countries which if mentioned sounds passing strange, bordering on superstition. Yet they speak of it as admitting no doubt whatever, and they must have some grounds for their assertions. This has not to my knowledge been of much
real practical use. The method referred to is that of speaking the cure to the ailment. Headache, stomachache, neuralgia, rheumatic pains are said to be driven away by this method, so that the sufferer obtains at least temporary rest. I do not believe myself in the truth of the same, but what I think very probable is that some few men possess the mercurial power, are able by means of it to bring temporary relief to pain, as they have been seen to do even in civilized countries.

Other wonderful processes attributed to the power of herbs, I have not had the opportunity of investigating. They sound so impossible that one is tempted to reject the very thought at once without a test. Experience however has taught me that it is no part of wisdom to proceed thus; every thing should be proved. The truth or falsehood demonstrated for the benefit of mankind, either as helping to increase the volume of knowledge, or to dispose impostures. Thus for instance it is said that a certain preparation when swallowed or kept in the mouth, renders one invulnerable. What would have been a severe wound is seen only as wheels with slight bruises burning. But some others of their preparations bear a more glaring impress of the superstitions, among which may be reckoned the following:—something made to hold in hand which enables
a man to walk at a prodigious rate impossible for ordinary mortals. Another, kept in the mouth gives instant fulfilment to every injunction. Another has the effect of reversing the economy of nature as it were; for, protected by it, the man who is struck off, lashed feels nothing at all whereas all the pains & torture are transferred to the striker!

These improbable stories are accepted in these countries with such implicit confidence, so taken for granted, that it will be more wise to investigate into these matters rather than reject all wholesale. This is indeed the best method, for the patient unravelling of mysteries or demonstrations of fallacies will pain a listening ear, whereas the man who rejects all offhand as barbarous superstitions will be treated as a "sounding foreigner" and he will thus be shut out of every intercourse that may lead to something beneficial. And after all, in investigating a pile of superstitions & improbabilities one might light upon a vein which may lead to something sterling & of importance, and the association of ideas that originally led to that which is called superstitions.

The marvellous is easily created here. Feats performed by mere practice physically are attributed to Medicine because (perhaps) all men cannot do the like.
Surgery.

The practice of surgery could scarcely be said to be in its infancy in this country. As a recognized profession, it has not yet been born. "Medicine Men" do not practice surgery; things are done in such a primitive way that one has scarcely any thing to learn from it, excepting that it affords a study whereby one might trace the gradual development of knowledge, from the skill of an ancient barber to that of a Syme or Anandale. Fractures are set without regard to the muscles which act upon the fragment; the broken limb is enveloped in a splint made of strips of bamboo about 3⁄8 in wide, of convenient length woven together. The "setting" of the fracture is left to accident rather than to skill. But the splint is very efficient, and may be used by any qualified Surgeon.

Cupping is done in a very satisfactory way. Cupping Calabashes the edge of cupping glasses are used; pellets of calabashes floated in oil are forced out, lighted, & thrown into the Cupping Calabashes & immediately applied to the spot with skill and rapidity, which makes the thing stick on. It is usual to use about half a dozen or so of them sticking on to a limb, to be removed one by one as they fall.

The habit is most common of making a large number of incision cuts with a lanceet and
medicaments applied on the bleeding points: they generally smart, and are used as means curative or as a prophylaxis.

Treatment of ulcers. Cancerics are of very general use, the base of ulcers are cleaned by force, as it were, juices of fresh leaves are the usual applications. But the most notable feature in the treatment consists in the number of articles of diet from which one is interdicted; amongst others, fresh meat or chicken. Unhealthy pronouncements are positively attributed to eating one or other of the interdicted articles of diet. "It is the fresh meat" "the corr" "the nut" that was eaten which shoots out of the surface.

Rest in bed forms no part of the treatment.

Gonoerhoe is common enough; one hears of specific remedies for it, but their structure is not unknown, and as they have no catheters nor any knowledge of passing one. Except of course in countries included within European colonies, deaths under painful circumstances have occurred. The deaths have been recorded of men of high rank from this cause. The sad death of an aged Christian gentleman was related one a short time ago, from what I diagnosed to be enlarged prostate causing retention of urine. He never had gonorrhea for over 40 years, he had been a respectable and
highly honored, a exemplary member of society and leader of men. He was over 60 at the time of his death from the cause stated above, and yet poor man he had no proper treatment, for they knew not what a practitioner, nor what it should be there, nor why should not the man survive as freely as he had done for over 60 years past. The knowledge of the calteter and its use will be a blessing in those dark regions beyond these settlements.

Hydrocele also is common, and a few tribes notably the Haiasas have the knowledge of lapping, and have been successful in some cases.

The present shall which is generally divided up into tribes and the land has no means of bringing it down. The land is so divided up that in the worst case there is no provision against a fire spreading which could burn it or destroy it. The land looks like a forest.

As it is a popular disease widely spread from abroad - the cause of all illness. They do this to make impressions on the friends who are ready to do anything to obtain relief. But these doctors often possess powerful, deep voices which do no harm, whereas are misinterpreted for rarity for they know nothing of the dilatation of the chest or how to prints at once. The general result are disasters beyond expression.
Midwifery.

Midwifery as a rule is practiced by midwives, although all women who have borne children are supposed to have a sufficient knowledge of the same. The posture is that of kneeling - in some cases, sitting on the floor. The patient completely stripped of every particle of dress the hair left dishevelled, and the mother or midwife posted at the back of the woman in labour.

At the onset of pain, the patient is told to walk about, suspend herself on her arms for several minutes at a time, run out for a pot of water at the nearest well, which is generally dashed up on her: she thus has to undergo species of minor tortures until delivered of her burden.

In difficult or tedious cases, medicine men are called in, and they never fail to find out the "cause of the evil." Some enemy is conceived to be a curse, which has to be cured, the child is tied in the womb. There is a peculiar disease lately imported from abroad - the "cause of all evil." They do this to make impression on the friends whose ready to do anything to obtain relief. But these doctors often prove powerful. Any topic which do harm when administered too early, for they know nothing of the dilatation of the bowels, nor how to find it out. The general results are disastrous beyond expression. Obstetrical
Operations are unknown, but there are a few facts connected with the female economy, which I think I should like to have noticed.

1. The onset of menstruation is not by any means earlier than it is in England. We were constantly told in lectures as well as in books that African girls menstruate earlier than European girls. The climacteric also. Here, as in Europe, town girls are somewhat earlier than country girls. What is all. 15 to 16 is the earliest. I have known several girls of 17 to 18 who knew nothing about it, especially in the country. The onset is marked with festivities.

2. Cessation. I have not met with a single case of the Menses ceasing under 50. Indeed, so far as I have seen, known, or heard, no woman in Nigeria expects to stop under 50. They would regard it as a calamity; they would tell you their mothers never stopped so early, why should they? They would undergo any expense to bring it on again. Imagination and tradition have painted for them all sorts of horrible diseases of which they would be killed at the climacteric, so that the repression is often heard among them, "Desire better to have cessation." Lectures and books would have us believe that in Tropical Africa women begin very early to stop earlier also.
but except in British Colonies, it is most unlikely that European travellers & querists could possibly elicit facts of such a nature from native women. Even in the Colonies it is very hard to get at facts at the first visit; the knowledge of the habits & language of the people with its figures of speech & allegories can alone help to bring it out. E.g. A young man brought his wife once to me & said, they had been married 4 months, & since that time the menses have not been “clean enough.” All the while he meant to say pregnancy has not taken place but wanted to know why not. By suggesting the continued appearance of the menses he meant me to gather his meaning. One must “read between the lines” to get at their facts.

3. Hot water. The use of hot water in Midwifery as hemostatic & stimulants to uterine contractions is but a recent discovery in England barely 8 years old. From time immemorial it has been practised here. Water so hot as man can bear without scalding is known as “Omi Abioms” i.e. “Lying-in women Water” for a week after parturition is it used, the internal treat gradually abated every day.

4. Diet of the lying in women. Till comparatively recent period—and one may even now read it in some books. The lying-in woman in Britain is kept on milk diet for a week
or so. In Africa, it is not so: the birth of a child is the signal for congratulating friends to provide provisions, notably, yams, flour, palm oil etc. In some cases, intimate friends would volunteer to cook and keep house for 7 days in boys and 7 in girls at the end of which there is to be a general feasting in the family. The lying-in woman is to be well fed is what one hears about. Even a neglectful husband would do something, in that period. Our women consequently do well more rapidly than European women do. These points are carefully noted down here, because a contrary notion prevails in Britain. To these may be added the natural custom of inducing women in labour to some physical exercise and the kneading potion, all of which are instinct to facilitate labour. It is certain a more scientific way of explaining this phenomenon of easy labour than what I have heard in London that labour is easier for African women as with the lower animals, being nearer to them in the scale of beings. Monkeys by descent. It is noticeable also, that those African ladies who adopted the habits of their European sisters suffer like them in the same manner and measure. And there is no doubt that the three primary facilitation labour more than the lying on the left side, as this latter has
scarcely any points in its favour but that of
decency & convenience.
The duration of pregnancy is placed in an average of 280 days. Cases of full 9 Calendar months last perhaps indeed it is the rule. But I desire here to record an Authentic case at least, in which pregnancy was exactly 265 days & a fully developed healthy boy was the termination.
The mother has had three labours previously and she regarded this last as being too late with her; from the 250th day, she was looking forward to a full term delivery. She is fruitful to a degree that one cortisol only is sufficient to ensure pregnancy, menstruation ceases only during pregnancy to reappear the month after parturition and continues through lactation.

On Twin pregnancies.
Some of our women, and notably Calabar women, and others at the Niger Delta have a very striking and intuitive way of diagnosing twin pregnancies. As in those regions, twins used at one time to be destroyed, a close watch was generally kept on pregnant women, and they generally discovered the twin pregnancy & invariably right. Many babies lives have thereby been saved. Among tribes where such infant murder does not exist, it is striking to see with how much coolness & certainty preparations are made for two.
There are many theories as to how twin pregnancies may be diagnosed, but none of them with absolute certainty except that the abdomen is unusually large. In the family, one of twins. Yet, there are more settled people, called Sages, who can tell almost by instinct, but seem very willing or unable to tell the diagnostic signs. It seems, however, that attention has not been sufficiently drawn to the Linea Nigra. In twin pregnancies they are generally very broad, and one has come under my notice of near 12 in six weeks.

Another diagnostic sign that some of our women state with the utmost confidence and correctness is the state of the legs and feet. It is said that in twin pregnancies there is swelling of the feet only, or from the feet upwards; but in true pregnancy, the feet are remarkably free from swelling whereas all the swelling is limited to the lower third of the leg, or between ankle and calf. The gait is also said to be different, one or both feet curved—probably due to the swelling.

It seems probable to me however, that every tribe has its own way of method of diagnosing and many come by it intuitively, unless they apt to give explanations, or are more or less bewildered by peculiarities when closely asked on such points, which to them is very trivial.
Diseases and their Treatment.

Diseases of the Tropics have formed the subject of several books and brochures, that I need not retrace the whole field. I intend merely to state what have come prominently under my notice in connection with the native mode of treatment.

Rheumatism is prevalent to an extent little imagined; indeed, it is generally supposed that the country being warm this malady should be rare here. But the reverse is the case. Rheumatism delights in moist climates, and swampsy countries, that these conditions prevail here.

The excessive heat moreover tempts to exposure, and exposure invites the ail-ment: perspiration is easily induced; the dresses soaked through, the unshaded trees that shade the streets at intervals allure the traveller to rest; he soon goes down but he rises in the morn-ing with his aches and pains.

It yields readily to the Salicylate treat-ment at times to Aruinice. I have not found Salicylate of Aruinice as serviceable as that of Soda however. I think it rather more of Aruinice than otherwise, it has more effect in material conditions.

This ailment is treated mainly by baths and unguents. Sometimes by fumigation. Malarial fevers are sometimes so treated also. Certain leaves are collected, among which are dried banana leaves & fresh lemon leaves. It is well known that the stone & leaves of the Banana tree are rich in Potassium salts (and commercial potash are manufactured from it by the natives of this country). The lemon also contains no doubt Citric Acid - hence it will be seen that their treatment after all is not irrational. It is the Alkaline mode of treatment. A decoction is made of these & one or two hot baths or fumigations gets therefore. Medicinal soaps are often used, but the ingredients entering into their composition are jealously concealed. In time these secrets will yield to the researches of the patient investigator.

A curious rough and ready treatment of Chronic Rheumatism may here be stated. A man sleeps in a draughty place and wakes up with a stiff and aching joint he instantly (before washing his mouth or speaking to any body) pours a quantity of "stale" saliva into his hand & rubs lightly on the stiff joint. An in-
strenuous relief is the result. This mode of treatment is readily available to all and every one who would make a trial of it, if fide. Hydrocele is another common disease. Singularly, very few of those who practice surgery understand or practice tapping. A few recall that of the many cases that have come under my notice, I select two remarkable for their size & duration for record. The following is a brief history of the cases:

Case 1. T. A. D. gave his case as follows:

"I am suffering from a swollen testicle. I believe it originated from a bubo I had when I was young. As I did not take a good care of it, it passed into the testicle. I drank plenty of country medicines, it sometimes got better, sometimes worse. I have had several children since it has not interfered with procreation."

On examination, the right testicle appears enormous. The history given although misleading is not one of orchitis, the right testicle was very tense, but the 'thrill' is discernible where percussed. The patient related how bleeding followed the enlarged testicle when he had the small pox. Probably, a prick opened into the testicular veins. The tunica was tapped and 80 fluid oz. or 4 pints
drawn out of it! The patient had had this complaint since 1867—now over 20 years, and not put on his breeches (with 4 pins impeding kneeling). As soon as relieved, his first thoughts were to dress himself, strappingly discarding the gowns & robes he had been obliged to wear, & parade himself about town almost as one risen from the dead.

The patient was of about 50 years of age.

Case 2. G.b. age 50+ 1/2

This case came to my notice while in temporary charge of the Colonal Hospital at Shertro—Sierra Leone.

Patient a prisoner. The testicles were so enormous that he could not walk, it had to be carried by itself, a patient borne in a hammock. While seen, the scrotum was very thin in some parts, threatened to slough in other parts. Pain & inconvenience in the cell where looked up, made them send for me. The scrotum from the root of the penis was 14½ in. long. It was a difficulty to find the penis itself, being drawn up by the scrotum & its heavy contents. The circumference of this tumour measured 28 in. The turgid mass is placed as it were in front of the man, and he could not escape from it. The presence
of fluid there was undoubted - it had never been tapped, one could not get from the patient the duration of the disease. He could only say "a long time."

This tumour when tapped gave out a quantity of fluid which on accurate measurement registered 9 pints 8½ ounces! The patient was strapped bandaged up, and although borne in a litter to the hopi was able to walk back to his cell. He was assured however that it will fill up again.

The prisoner was next day conveyed to the city for the Assizes and thus passed out of my hand to that of the Colonial Surgeon D. Palmer Rogers M.D. Solin.

So far as I know this is the largest quantity of hydrocele fluid drawn out at one time from a man, on record. (Nine pints, eight half ounces.)

The two cases given above show the want of surgical knowledge amongst the people here. For both patients were men of mean and position and could have commanded any available cure within their reach. Elephantiasis exists and are often confounded with this. The people being poor fishermen, they often attribute hydroceles to sickness and intercourse.
Qualified men who make use of native herbs are highly thought of. It is sadly striking to see the method of treatment by unscientific persons: although they have drugs of remarkable potency, yet failure often attends them, chiefly because almost always they treat symptoms without regard to causation. Any internal complaint that exhibits features not understood is credited to "worms" so there are "dyspeptic worms," "endo-melitic worms," "parasitical worms," etc.

Cases of leprosy have come under my notice. Very few tribes attempt their cure; in most others the unfortunate is cast out or destroyed.

Material fever the commonest disease along this coast. It has been well described. My object here is merely to state the native method of treatment, which consists of a paste made of several roots and drugs, in which Aromatics & Capsicum predominates. It drunk in a pop or Arrowroot. In a severe case, this treatment is followed by baths, of the kind described above.

I have heard of native surgeons skilful enough to anticipate the spleen, but have not seen any done; but the removal of the cervical glands is an everyday practice, as they are supposed to be concerned and are chief agents in the production of the fatal disease known here as The Sleeping
sickness. This fatal disease is somewhat common in West Africa, it may attack children or adults, but generally young adults. The patient begins by looking stupid, gradually passes into a state of stupor, and remains thus sleeping all day except when aroused. The sleep may come over him under every condition, even during meals. The patient does not look reduced. No sufficient number of cases has come under the care of qualified men as yet for thorough investigation. But it baffles "Native" doctors.

The difficulty that lies in the way of studying and understanding this disease thoroughly, is the objection most people have of sending their children to hospitals, and above all to the post-mortem examinations of cases that have proved fatal. Time alone can cure this prejudice. Cases that may likely prove fatal are hurried to the farms, unless a P. Morton examination be made of such a strange and fatal disease, no clear idea of it can be had. At present, the "Native doctor" attribute it to the enlarged Cervical glands.
Conclusion.

It will thus be seen that the Therapeutics of West Africa is in its infancy. Very manystarting medicines are not available for general use, as the ingredients are always kept secret. By patient working in their midst however, there is promise of a bright future.

Surgery being so little practised, a qualified and practical surgeon carries with him more credit than they would heaiver on a physician, not because the latter is despised or thought inferior, but because they prefer generally & place greater confidence in their own obscure methods.

Leaves, roots, & barks from plants growing about 60 miles or more inland are found to have greater potency than those obtained nearer the coast. Their preparations are powders, infusions, decoctions. Those intended for preservation are powdered, mixed with oil, placed in small pots, changed over the hearth. These are generally taken in small quantities. No tinctures or pills are made by them.

In conclusion, I have only to say it will be surely, as opportunity offers, to investigate & publish the accounts of powerful drugs and as far as necessary to send specimens to the University Laboratory for skilful analysis.

O. Johnson.