

OBSERVAÇÃO XXIII.

De huma febre ardente, a que sobrevierão grandes faltas de somno, puxos ardentes, & dores insupportaveis de ventre, & das pernas, tudo procedido de qualidade gallica: & porque o Medico assistente atemorizado com a ardencia da febre, & multidão dos symptomas referidos se não resolvia a purgar ao doente, chegou a estar ungido, até que por meu conselho tomou os pões de mercurio doce, a que chamamos Calomelanos, & com elles salvou a vida com admiração de todos, & credito da Arte.

1. **P**arecerá incrível, & que excede a todo o encarecimento a cura, que fiz em Francisco Dias de Araujo, morador na Bica de Duarte Bello. Quarenta dias avia que este homem não podia dormir, nem sossegar por causa de huma febre ardentissima, acompanhada de ardentes puxos, a que se juntárao camaras continuas, acerrimas dores de ventre, & de ambas as pernas: & supposto que o sobredito enfermo, logo que adoeceo, chamou para director da sua cura a hum Medico bem famigerado; comtudo, porque a doença, & os referidos symptomas creciaõ de monte a monte, me chamárao aos vinte & sete dias da doença; & ouvindo eu o processo della, & dos remedios applicados, entendi que para acudir a taõ formidaveis symptomas, quaes são os referidos, era necessario dar logo remedios opiados, assim porque a terribilidade das dores o pedia; como porque a grande falta de somno os aconselhava.

2. Não quiz o companheiro seguir o meu conselho, ou por ser mais acautelado, ou por ter menos experiencia dos remedios narcoticos; persuadindose que para mitigar a ferocidade das dores, & provocar o somno, bastariao humas amendoadas adoçadas (em lugar de assucar) com duas onças de lambedor de pa-

João Curvo Semedo, *Observações medicas doutrinaes de cem casos gravissimos*, [Medical Observations of One Hundred Very Grave Cases] (Lisbon, 1707), pgs. 70-73

Observation XXIII

*Regarding a burning fever, accompanied by great insomnia, burning pains, and unbearable aches in the abdomen and legs, **all caused by a syphilitic condition**. The attending physician, terrified by the intensity of the fever and the multitude of symptoms, was hesitant to purge the patient, allowing the illness to progress to the point where the patient had been anointed (likely referring to last rites). Only after following my advice to administer a dose of sweet mercury, which we call Calomelanos, was the patient's life saved, much to the amazement of everyone and the credit of the art of medicine.*

It may seem unbelievable and exaggerated, but the cure I achieved for **Francisco Dias de Araujo, a resident of Bica de Duarte Bello**, was remarkable. For forty days, this man had been unable to sleep or breathe properly due to an extremely high fever, accompanied by severe burning pains and continuous bowel movements, along with unbearable pain in his abdomen and legs. Although this patient had initially called upon a well-known physician at the onset of his illness, the disease and symptoms had worsened day by day. I was called on the twenty-seventh day of the illness, and after hearing about the progress of the disease and the treatments applied, **I understood that to address such formidable symptoms, it was necessary to immediately administer opiated remedies [i.e. opiates]**, both because the severity of the pain demanded it and because the extreme insomnia suggested it.

The other physician did not want to follow my advice—either out of greater caution or due to less experience with narcotic remedies—believing that to alleviate the intensity of the pain and induce sleep, it would suffice to give the patient some almond-based sweets, sweetened with two ounces of papal syrup in place of sugar, **poulas** (poppy juice) or **dormideiras** (sleep-inducing herbs), and a poultice of *Populeon* ointment for the temples and forehead. However, although I had great respect for the other physician due to his knowledge and age, I had more respect for my own conscience, and for this reason, I did not follow his advice. I understood that an almond-based sweet was too mild a remedy to counter such severe pain and terrifying symptoms.

Nevertheless, the patient had so much faith in the other physician that he refused to follow my recommendation. As soon as the appropriate hour came, the patient ordered the almond-based sweet and the application of the *Populeon* ointment to his temples. But none of it worked, as the abdominal

and leg pains, the bowel movements, the convulsions, and the fever, more furious than serpents and more vicious than vipers, tormented the miserable patient to such an extent that he did not rest for a moment.

For this reason, he deeply regretted not having followed my advice and promised me that on the following night, he would do as I had prescribed. From there, I took the liberty to prescribe him a pill of three grains of opiated laudanum, with which he slept through the entire night with remarkable tranquility. But because the fever, the pains, the lack of sleep, and the other symptoms stemmed from a **syphilitic condition**, I knew that all remedies applied would be in vain unless we used antidotes to extinguish the aforementioned condition. Based on this reasoning, I had another discussion with the other physician, explaining to him that I had given laudanum to the patient, even though I knew it would not cure his illness.

However, compelled by the patient's unbearable pain and the sleepless nights he endured, I felt it was necessary to follow the advice of **Valles** [Franciscus Valles, a Spanish physician], who counsels us that often in medicine, it is wise to depart from strict rules and focus on alleviating the symptoms first, rather than addressing their underlying cause. This is why I gave the aforementioned remedy, so that by sleeping and resting, the patient might regain the strength needed to endure the weight of the illness and be able to receive the proper remedies to eradicate the underlying condition.