was able distinctly to make out the form and size of the tumour, which I considered to be a foetal head.

Her friends having granted permission for an inspection of the body, I proceeded, in company with my friend, Mr. W. H. Eddie, surgeon of this place, to make it in the afternoon. *Abdomen*: on reflecting the parietes, we found the viscera concealed by a large coagulum of several pounds weight, together with some pints of fluid blood in the peritoneal cavity; having removed these, the first object which struck our attention was a male foetus, (between the 5th and 6th month of gestation), with its head just below the margin of the liver; on tracing the funis we found that it terminated in the placenta, still partly attached to the interior of the parietes of the left fallopian tube, which was rent throughout, nearly the whole of its extent. The uterus was little, if at all enlarged; its cavity lined by the decidua, and the os plugged with mucus.

ON THE ACETATE OF LEAD.

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THE excellent practical paper by my esteemed friend, Mr. Sweeting, of Abbotsbury, upon the above subject, in the last number of our *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*, would seem to call for individual experience of the remedy therein treated of. I had hoped that the experience of the last twenty years sufficed to place, beyond a doubt, the extreme value and the comparative innocuousness of the acetate of lead, where used, under ordinary precautions, as a therapeutic agent. For several years I had an opportunity of seeing this remedy largely employed, in doses of five or eight grains, by the first toxicologist of the day—Dr. Christison, and hence became early and usefully familiarized with its several properties.

In the year 1837 the town and neighbourhood of Taunton was invaded by an epidemic dysentery, in which the superior value of lead, in my hands, was most conspicuous. I shall not scruple to give an outline of two cases illustrative of its efficacy, and of Mr. Sweeting's main position; the one from my private case-book, the other from hospital practice.

In August, 1837, I was attending, with a very respectable surgeon of this town, a young lady of strumous habits, who was labouring under the then prevailing epidemic, or rather, perhaps, endemic. We were summoned very early one morning with an alarm that the patient was bleeding to death. The surgeon was prevented, by a midwifery engagement, from accompanying me—a distance of three miles—but I fortified myself from his surgery with half an ounce of acetate of lead and a bottle of compound spirits of ammonia. Arrived at the house, I was shown three evacuations, the two first containing about a pint of loose coagula each, the third being a solid coagulum, about fourteen inches

long, and forming a complete mould of the colon. The patient was cold and pulseless; the eyes fixed and glazed; the tongue cold, and the cold dews of death had already descended upon her. The anæmic state was very marked, including the rare and sighing, almost sobbing, respiration. In this dilemma I gave two teaspoonfuls of brandy, with a few drops of Spt. Ammon. Co., rapidly followed by a scruple of the acetate of lead. In the meantime I had prepared a small starch enema, with a half-drachm of the acetate. Within less than half an hour the next coagulum passed, and I immediately administered the enema, and gave the second scruple of the acetate. One hour afterwards I gave a third scruple, and I had the happiness to see my patient convalesce without further hæmorrhage, without any unpleasant symptom, and I can add that she is now alive, and a most useful member of society.

Later in the same year I was called upon to advise for an old soldier of the Coldstream Guards. This poor fellow passed daily large sphacelated portions of the colon and rectum, the mutilated intestine protruding through the anus in large gangrenous shreds, like the fingers of a glove. He had been treated with mercury, and finally with large doses of crude opium, without the smallest relief. Here eight grains of the acetate every three hours acted like a charm, combined with the local use, and I meet the old man now, in my daily walk to the hospital, as hale and hearty as an octogenarian can be.

I have selected these two cases, not as those in which the largest amount of the remedy has been well borne, but as those in which full doses have been followed by the happiest possible effects; indeed, during twenty-one years' ample experience of this remedy, I have never witnessed a single untoward symptom from its therapeutic use.

I have stated above that such has been the universal effect of the remedy "*in my hands*," and I did so for this especial reason:—During the endemic of 1837, several of my professional brethren, hearing of my successful mode of dealing with it, inquired the particulars. The remedy came into general use, but produced such irritating and unfavourable symptoms, in doses of *one or two* grains, the limit to which it was THEN judged safe to restrict it, that it was, after a short and unfair trial, abandoned.

The only point on which I presume to differ from my old and excellent friend, Mr. Sweeting, is this—that of combination. In accordance with the practice of Dr. Christison, and the rule laid down by the late Dr. A. T. Thomson, of University College, I always give acetate of lead in a FLUID form; *never* without acetic acid, and very rarely indeed without Battley's Liq. Opii Sedativ. My large hospital and other opportunities have enabled me to test the relative value of lead and opium, separately and conjointly. The result has, *ceteris paribus*, determined me in favour of the combination.

Taunton, June 12, 1851.