PROVINCIAL MEDICAL & SURGICAL JOURNAL.

No. 6. VOL. I.] LONDON, SATURDAY, NOV. 6, 1841-2.

PRICE SIXPENCE.
[STAMPED EDITION SEVENPENCE.]

CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON A

CASE OF POISONING WITH OPIUM, AND ON OPIUM EATING.

DELIVERED AT THE CHARING-CROSS HOSPITAL,

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JANE JONES, aged 21, a domestic servant, in consequence of misunderstandings with a fellow servant, took opium, which she procured in penny-worths at four different shops. She swallowed the whole, and the quantity might be computed at forty or forty-five grains.

She almost immediately felt remorse, and came voluntarily to the hospital, earnestly desiring to submit to the measures necessary for averting the consequences of her rashness, and was admitted under the care of Dr. Chowne.

Oct. 9.—First day. The stomach-pump was immediately used, large quantities of fluid were successively passed into the stomach and withdrawn from it; and after this, an emetic of sulphate of zinc was administered, which brought up a small piece of crude opium.

She began to feel effects from the opium when she arrived at the hospital, which, according to her estimate, did not exceed half an hour from the time of her swallowing the poison. Within an hour after taking it, although in the interim the stomach-pump had been used, and the emetic had taken plentiful effect, she began to feel a degree of drowsiness which made constant attention to prevent her from sleeping indispensable. There were free evacuations from the bowels, (procured by aperients,) as well as from the stomach, and these together afforded every prospect that the greater part of the opium would soon be carried out of the primæ viæ, leaving the effects of that only to be combatted which had, before the action of the evacuants, been absorbed into the system. Lest, however, undissolved particles of opium should remain adherent to the mucous membrane, that of the stomach more particularly, from which it is extremely difficult of removal, it did not appear to be proper to administer acids, which, although useful when the tincture of opium has been the poison, is calculated to be prejudicial by accelerating solution, and consequently absorption into the system, where crude opium has been taken. Under these circumstances, the treatment has consisted of encouraging the action of the stomach by copious draughts of warm water, and of the bowels by an enema, and keeping the patient roused, and in motion. She had also occasionally coffee, and a stimulating mixture of ammonia. This treatment was continued until it appeared to be safe to allow short but carefully-watched inter-

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vals of repose. The symptoms which were present during the first few hours, and which might safely be attributed to the opium, were few, others, as the state of the pulse, of the skin, and of the tongue, might be attributable partly to the means in operation for her cure. The symptoms, however, which were attributable to the opium, were very characteristic—for example, a peculiar drowsy expression of countenance, dull inexpressive appearance of the eyes, the pupil closely contracted, and varying but very little, whether turned to or from a strong light, a strong, almost insuperable tendency to pass, not gradually, but at once, into a profound sleep, yet still capable of being brought as quickly back to consciousness. The pulse was small and quick, the tongue moist, skin sometimes dry, sometimes with cold perspiration; the state of the pulse, tongue, and skin, however, may have existed under the effect of the emetic and other means used, and although not uncommon in cases of poisoning by opium, cannot in this case be safely attributed wholly to it.

10.—Second day. Had scarcely slept all night, having been constantly roused. General aspect very similar to that of yesterday, except that the individual symptoms, drowsiness, torpor, &c. were moderated; had pain at the scrobiculus cordis and in the abdomen; had taken large quantities of drink: up to this time renal secretions in natural quantity; bowels acting moderately with the aid of aperients; pulse small, feeble, 68; breathed slowly.

To continue the mixture, with ammonia, coffee, &c., and to be frequently roused and moved about; to lie high at the head in bed.

11.—Third day. Had slept heavily, but with bad dreams, occasional starts and screams. Constipation; no renal secretion since yesterday about one o'clock P.M.; tongue moist; pulse 96, small; senses dull, looks sleepy; eyes inactive, pupils still small. Catamenia absent; should have taken place yesterday.

To continue the mixture, coffee, &c.

12.—Fourth day. Countenance rather improved; appearance of eyes better, but still dull and inexpressive; pupils rather larger; more acted upon by light; no renal secretion passed since the 10th until to-day, making about forty-eight hours; not abundant; still very drowsy; slept a good deal. Disagreeable dreams, sees insects, flies, &c. while waking; bowels sluggish; tongue faintly brown; pulse small, feeble, 72.

13.—Fifth day. General appearance rather better; restless feeling of limbs and body, but still sleepy; keeps dropping off into a state of unconsciousness, yet still disturbed. Head, aching and heavy; eyes heavy and painful, as if bruised or crushed; renal secretion, natural quantity; bowels natural.

To have mixture, with diluted sulphuric acid, three times a day. Catamenia still absent.

14.—Sixth day. General appearance gradually improving; tongue cleaner; pulse 72, very small

and feeble; head still aching; eyes heavy, and still feeling as if bruised, but easy when closed; has tried to read, but cannot, the letters run all together; has attempted to work with her needle, but it tries her eyes and hurts her head; slept heavily, but had disagreeable dreams; bowels have acted; renal secretion natural; appetite moderate; thirsty; hands rather tremulous. Does not now feel any pain; says she feels in a careless state, indifferent about everything—everything seems to vanish away from her thoughts; does not now seem to have anything to trouble her; has not had any agreeable feelings from the action of the opium; her condition now is one of neither pleasure nor pain, but time seems long; still feels drowsy; if she would give way to it, could have a sort of sleep all day. Catamenia still absent. This is the first instance in which it has been delayed since the first appearance.

To continue the acid mixture; to have mutton diet.

15.—Seventh day. General appearance better; tongue clean; countenance and eyes better; kidneys performing their function naturally; sleep sound and without dreams; catamenia free, much as usual.

To omit medicine; to continue the diet.

16.—Eighth day. Altogether better, walking about the ward; bowels constipated; used to be free before taking the opium; catamenia free; going on favourably.

Gentlemen, the subject of poisoning by opium is one of great interest to the profession, as it is also to the public. A very large proportion of the poisonings in this country have opium in some of its forms for their agent, as you will perceive by this abstract from a table which I have made from parliamentary returns.* Besides the interest which attaches to this subject, on account of the deaths which it causes promptly and obviously, is that which arises from what is misnamed the use of opium, but from which calamities almost more dreadful than death reduce existence to a protracted misery. I have here some notes relating to an example of this kind which I will read; I took them down from the narrative of a woman who was some time since in this hospital, and who had been many years an opium-taker; she gave me, in the course of inquiries and investigations which I made, a very detailed history, not only of the quantities she took, but of the effects of the drug upon her health, and on her feelings; on her system generally, and on individual functions. She had seen a great deal of good society, and had so far mixed with it, (though I am not aware in what capacity,) that her own appearance and manner, and what is still more to our present purpose, her capabilities of reasoning, and of expressing herself, were altogether superior to what we are in the habit of meeting with in hospital

patients. When she found that I inquired as to the effects of the opium upon her constitution, sensations, &c., she remarked that she had very lately read the book called the English Opium Eater, but that she was amazed to find that it contained so little information that could, so far as she was capable of judging, be interesting to the faculty. Perhaps we shall not be exercising more than a due precaution, if we consider that in her details, made under an impression, that the English Opium Eater's were deficient in this particular, and possibly with a desire to fill up the hiatus, she may have given a little more than the exactly appropriate force to some of her expressions. I have strong collateral reasons, however, for considering the general tenor of her descriptions to be essentially true.

To proceed: she was, when admitted, twenty-seven years of age, of rather fair complexion, middle height; apparently of a sound constitution, otherwise than as it was affected by the use of opium. As a child she had excellent health; at about ten years of age was with a lady who habitually took laudanum. At this time she received a fright from seeing a man fall and fracture his skull—"part of his brain spattered upon her;" the lady with whom she was, gave her some laudanum in a liqueur glass, which she (the patient) estimated at about two drachms, and adds, that she supposes the lady was herself under the influence of laudanum at the time, or she would not have given her so much. Soon after taking the laudanum she felt ill and sleepy, and had a medical man who sat up with her all night. When the effect of the laudanum went off, she had a diarrhoea, which was checked by fifteen drops of laudanum. The diarrhoea, and the pain by which it had been accompanied, were relieved so agreeably by the laudanum, that she thought she would never feel pain again while laudanum was to be had. The effects were so agreeable, that she had small quantities daily, and took it for her gratification; she found it necessary to increase the dose daily; at the end of sixteen months could take half a wine-glassful at a time; took this quantity once a day in the morning; almost immediately after she had taken it, she felt strong and cheerful, active in her mind, industrious, and disposed to learn her lessons; it enabled her to learn with facility, quickness, and clearness; she thought it gave her a zest for acquirements. This exhilaration continued steady through the day, and until bed-time, without the aid of other stimulants; she ate but little, not having an appetite; felt so light-hearted, that she was more like a spirit than a human body.

First after taking her dose, she had a nice natural glow of heat; then a dryness and itching of the skin; when she got into bed, she fell into a great perspiration; while under the influence of the laudanum, the secretion of the kidneys very scanty; she noticed this to be the case, in comparison with girls of the same age; passed but seldom; the colour dark; bowels constipated; for the constipation she took a little dry common table salt; she thinks the laudanum induced a disposition to eat salt; it had the effect of an aperient; was not in the habit of eating salt until she took laudanum; has the same propensity now when under the influence of opiates, but not at other times. Used to sleep pretty well; dreamt occasionally, but not in a manner that was remarkable;

* During the years 1837, 1838, the total number of inquests held, where death was found by verdict of jury to have been caused by poison, was 546. Of these, there were poisoned—

By crude opium	-	-	-	40
Acetate of morphia	-	-	-	2
Laudanum	-	-	-	133
Godfrey's cordial	-	-	-	5
Syrup of poppies	-	-	-	5
Cough syrup	-	-	-	2
Infant's mixture	-	-	-	1
Laudanum with aquafortis	-	-	-	1
Laudanum and prussic acid	-	-	-	1

at that time could leave the laudanum off for a day or two without depression, and occasionally did so, partly for experiment, and partly because she had not a strong desire for it.

Went to Malta—was six years in the Mediterranean, during which time she visited many of the Greek islands. Still kept increasing the dose of laudanum; she became acquainted with some Greek women, with whom she took wine or opium or coffee. By the time she was sixteen years of age, could take very large quantities of laudanum; secretion of the kidneys still very scanty; skin dry during the day; perspirations at night; the bowels as when smaller doses were taken.

Was (with the lady before spoken of) a great deal on board ship, (a man-of-war,) while in the Mediterranean. While under the influence of laudanum, evinced a daring spirit, so much so as to astonish the sailors; would go without fear up into the shrouds; would remain upon deck, when other females were put below, as when bouting ship, &c.; her nerves seemed so strong that she could do anything: in one instance, as an act of daring, during a squall, went and hung on upon the yard-arm, while the ship rolled dreadfully; was never sea-sick; had none of the fear usual to females.

During her visits to the Greek women, often took very large doses of solid opium. Upon my remarking to her that the quantity of solid opium which she described as having taken, was considerably more than equivalent to the quantities of laudanum she had been accustomed to take, she said, I should find that any opium eater could take a great deal more opium than laudanum. With reference to the Greek habit of commonly taking coffee after opium, she said that in her own case it took off the effect of opium, and therefore she used to decline it. She never had any explanation why the Greeks take what is so likely to neutralize the effect of the opium.

She never observed that the Greeks were exhilarated by the opium. She has observed that the Greek men who went in the morning to the divan were weak and palsied, and that they came away strong, seemingly a little intoxicated, but still not exhilarated.

At 16, had catamenia; nothing unusual about the accession.

At Zante had fever, when between 16 and 17 years of age, she thinks typhus. The doctors gave her laudanum occasionally to produce sleep; they knew she had been in the habit of taking it: but recollects their remarking that thirty drops sent her to sleep as it would another person. They remarked to her, when the fever was over, that if she liked to leave off taking opium, she had a good opportunity, as she had not taken more than thirty drops during twenty-four hours in the course of her illness. She returned to it, however, almost immediately after. Her friends endeavoured to prevent her having access to any, but she got a bottle of acetous tincture, of the women who came out to the vessels in the bum-boats, who always bring some with them. She took it because she felt weak and unhappy, and wished to have again the agreeable feelings she used to experience.

She remarks that the acetous tincture did not produce the calm stupor, or stillness, and flagging of the spirits, that was produced by crude opium,

nor the exhilarating effect of ordinary laudanum; neither did it produce the dryness of skin and itching that was produced by both crude opium and laudanum, but the skin retained its natural state. Under the use of large doses of the acetous tincture, none of the secretion of the kidneys was passed for three days and three nights, and then not more than half a pint. Did not in the interim suffer as if from distension. Bowels still constipated, but acted on by salt.

Returned to England after a passage of about two months, during which time she was occasionally and for days without opiates, but was in a wretched state of lowness and depression; with shiverings, cold perspirations, the countenance pale, deathly, and in every respect changed; had violent diarrhoea. Copious renal secretions; had pain of the loins, and she considers that she had inflammation of the kidneys.

During her first three weeks in England took the ordinary tincture. Her daily consumption, she says, about four ounces. During the succeeding six months took four ounces and a half daily, with some crude opium.

Considers that from the time she left Zante her constitutional health was good, although suffering depression, &c., in the absence of opium, but when under the influence of it, seemed insensible to cold, even on inclement days in the winter. Again, had scanty secretions from the kidneys; difficulty in passing it; not the difficulty of pain, but of deficiency, without sense of fulness. Bowels as usual. Catamenia healthy, and, up to the period when my notes were taken, had never felt headache. She says the expression, *never*, is not too strong a one.

At 19 years of age was seven months advanced in pregnancy, and suffered great mental affliction. During the early part of her pregnancy, took very large doses of laudanum daily; her expression was, that she almost lived on laudanum. Sometimes took *excessive* doses, did not either sleep or feel drowsy, but often sat all night in her chair, quite calm and still, not wanting even to read. The night did not seem more than an hour long. Did not breathe, nor want to breathe, so often as usual, and her heart did not beat so fast; she has remarked this for the length of a whole day.

When her labour came upon her, she was riot under the influence of laudanum; had a safe delivery after seven hours. The placenta followed soon after the child. About six hours after the birth of the placenta she had violent hæmorrhage.

The child (a boy) was, she says, so fine a child that it was remarked upon by the doctor: it continued to be a fine growing healthy child for three years, at which age it died of croup.

She gave the child the breast for five weeks; she took laudanum while she was suckling, but only a little given to her by the doctor; she thinks she could not have taken more than a drachm a day.

She was prohibited the excessive use of laudanum during the first five months after her confinement, but suffered great lowness of spirits, and frequent attacks of diarrhoea in consequence. Slept badly while restricted to small quantities, keeping awake sometimes three or four nights, and when she slept having frightful dreams; during this partial abstinence she was in a miserable state altogether,

At the end of the five months had a fresh cause of trouble, and procured a pint of laudanum from a druggist, which she *says she* took in two nights and two days, in small quantities and very often; it made her feel happy, and think light of the troubles she was beset with. She had no appetite, but cannot say whether from the opium or the state of her mind. Did not go to bed for a week, but sat up from preference, sometimes standing up on the floor in a state of stupor. Continued taking from half a pint to three quarters of a pint a day; this she took in desperation. While under the immediate effect of these large doses had not perspiration, but when the effect began to die away perspiration returned.

Renal secretion still scanty, and passed with effort.

From this time, for three years, she almost wholly kept her room, and abandoned herself to the use of laudanum; sometimes in the course of a morning taking half a pint; this was occasionally rejected from the stomach, and she felt extremely ill; after a time, however, her stomach felt as if again prepared for the reception of more, and she took a large draught, (she says a pint,) and afterwards felt strong again, and had an appetite. At this time she was prone to give way to melancholy thoughts.

After any temporary interruption to the use of it, her reason for resuming it was the lowness she suffered in its absence; the feelings were lowness, downright illness, cold sweats, loss of memory, difficulty of speech; could scarcely move her tongue to articulate, it seemed too indolent to perform its office.

During these privations the renal secretions were passed in very large quantities, very pale; odour generally not particular, but at some times the urine had a heavy odour, resembling some wall-flower, but she could not recollect the name; has perceived the same since she has been in the hospital. She had at these times pain across the loins, and shooting down the thighs to the ankles: it had not the peculiar odour when in small quantities.

The interruptions to her use of laudanum were when she could not go out to procure it; besides the other consequences of privation, she had severe diarrhoea; she considers that the diarrhoea would have lasted until she could procure a fresh supply; it required an immense draught to stop it. She considers an immense dose a pint of laudanum, and then an ounce or an ounce and a half of crude opium, which she took for amusement. She thinks that at the time opium would not kill.

At this time she was a fortnight entirely without the drug, (not voluntarily,) and had all the distressing symptoms already described, including diarrhoea and copious renal secretion. In consequence of the diarrhoea, a doctor saw her, who gave her doses of laudanum, which she estimates at twenty or thirty drops, repeated three or four times; it had no effect, and he suspected the laudanum was not good. He sent her a chalk mixture with laudanum, one tablespoonful to be taken occasionally; she took it all at once, and felt as if she had had a good drop of laudanum; this checked the diarrhoea.

While still under the influence of this last dose, she set off in an open vehicle to travel a distance of twenty miles in a heavy rain; got thoroughly wet;

it was late in September. Although wet and drenched throughout the journey, *she took no cold.*

At this time she resumed the use of the common tincture and crude opium: she generally took the tincture first, because it produced more excitement of spirits, and she then took opium to prolong the effect; she thinks the effects of opium are more enduring than those of laudanum.

At this time she was in Dublin, and she states that a physician there doubting whether she could take so much as she had stated, to convince him, she took off a large quantity of laudanum in his presence. She stated, without my questioning her, the physician's name, and thus gave me an opportunity, which I have been extremely glad to avail myself of, in order to test, in some degree, the truth of her general story. I addressed a letter to Dr. Burgess, when he was last in Ireland, detailing to him the information I was desirous of obtaining; he has put into my hands this letter, addressed by the physician to myself.

"Sir,—I feel great pleasure in answering your inquiry. I have a recollection of the person you mention, and of her taking the laudanum, but, to the best of my memory, the quantity was three ounces. Even this, when I witnessed it, alarmed me so much that I had the stomach pump in readiness, lest she should be seriously narcotized. She was a regularly established opium eater, and required a daily allowance of laudanum.

"Your obedient servant,

"_____.

"5th September, 1841."

This letter enables me to allude with more confidence to the case, as it is a corroboration of an important point in her narrative, which is calculated to give greater credibility to the whole.

She remained in Ireland four months, and continued taking as usual.

A gentleman gave her a small wine-bottle of Batley's sedative. "Batley's liquor sedative opii" she calls it. It was put into the possession of a person, with injunctions to give it sparingly; she had one dose, a quarter of a pint, and not feeling satisfied, she quarrelled with the person, got the bottle and took half a pint, not caring whether she lived or died. Soon after taking it she felt low; it did not strengthen her like laudanum; was weak, and seemed powerless; was conscious of what those about her were doing, but could neither speak nor make any sign. This state continued three days: in the interim she was bled from the arm; does not know to what extent; she was told that she had been cold, that her legs had swollen; had constant sighing and faint yawning, but no sleep; does not know what was the state of the bowels or of the renal secretions.

For some days after this, laudanum, even in the usual doses, had not the accustomed effects; she felt as if something was oppressing her breathing, as if the air was too thick, and as if an oppressive load was over her which she could not break through. Yet the window was open, and the place airy.

This was the only form of opium that ever affected her head—it filled her head with a rushing noise, not pain; she was scarcely conscious when people were speaking to her, unless they spoke so

as to rouse her. She never took Batley's solution again; it made her too sedate.

She left Ireland to come to England, and got about a quart bottle of laudanum to bring with her; she took, she says, in two days about one-third part; on the third day her bottle was broken by accident; she was so unwell, however, for want of laudanum, that the captain put into Plymouth purposely to enable her to procure a fresh supply—she got a large bottle, which brought her to London.

Of this she took so much, that when she arrived in London, she felt every step she took as if she was going to fall, and nothing could keep her up.

From London she went into Berkshire, where she continued the habit, but in smaller quantities, as she could not afford to buy large; about four or five ounces of laudanum a day, sometimes not so much.

Returned to London, and continued taking opium in unequal doses. During this period had, although taking opium, attacks of cold shivering, pain across her loins, and weakness in the back to such an extent, that she was fearful of falling down. In these attacks she has appeared as if she was dying, and they have been followed by diarrhoea, with pain of the bowels. She had also fulness of the head when under the influence of opium, which she did not feel formerly.

At times took again extreme doses, sometimes about half a pint; this would keep her awake all night, but the night did not appear long; she was thinking over previous happy days, as if she was enjoying them again.* On the following day she was calm, with calm slow breathing, slow beating of the heart; the thoughts not active, but rather passive, with inclination to sigh; at night there was great despondency. During the effects of these excessive doses, she had still the same symptoms on the skin (eruptions at the ankles, &c.) as before, and the same diminution of renal secretion.

About two years since the catamenia ceased suddenly, without her being able to ascribe it to any particular cause; there was no return until after her admission into the hospital.

The circumstances under which she was brought in were, that she had been trying to break through her habit, by restricting herself to small doses, about a grain a day: five grains of "pill. sap. with opium," she said, for she knew all the preparations of opium, and the strength, as to opium, of each, but she considered that she was dragging on a miserable existence. She purposely took an enormous dose, and under the influence of it was brought in. She says, for the last twelve months she has often thought everybody slightly deranged but herself.

There are many points of interest in the case of the opium-taker, which, however, our time will not permit us to dwell upon.

The case of Jane Jones has proceeded favourably, yet the appearance of danger continued somewhat longer than usual. As a general rule, most fatal cases terminate within eight hours from the time of swallowing the poison; few prove fatal

at a later period than twenty-four hours; at the end of forty-eight hours, however, in her case there appeared to be a strong tendency to sleep, which it was not prudent to overlook. The effects of the opium not only continued long, but began somewhat early; there is considerable difference, however, as a general rule between the different periods at which opium acts in different forms, and on different constitutions. The tincture is generally quicker in its effect than crude opium.

Tincture of opium taken on an empty stomach, we generally find, acts in a few minutes, and a dangerous coma may be established in half an hour. Yet there is an example in which, after taking tincture of opium two and a half ounces, and one drachm of the extract, one hour elapsed; another in which two drachms were taken, and there was not any effect until five hours after.

Crude opium appears to vary still more; in one case Isopor followed in fifteen minutes after taking two drachms, in another eight ounces (the largest quantity on record as being taken at once) did not begin to show effects until an hour after: these variations (depending upon peculiarity of constitution or of circumstances) suggest the propriety of immediate attention. Opium is not unfrequently used in external applications, both for adults and for children; and while we recollect how peculiarly susceptible children particularly are of the effects of opium, even in minute doses, it may be proper to recollect, that, according to Orfila, effects of opium are not less energetic when applied to wounds, than when administered internally.

According to that author, it is energetic in the greatest degree when injected into the veins—in the next greatest when applied to wounds—and in the third degree, when taken into the stomach.

Several examples may be found recorded by Christison. An adult, for instance, applied, in order to allay the irritation of a blister, an opium poultice, from which he fell into a deep sopor; and a child about two months old nearly lost its life from the application of a cerate containing a few drops of laudanum to an excoriated surface. These are facts which it especially behoves us to recollect, as beacons against similar results.

In Jones we perceived effects which are frequent in persons under the influence of opium. A common effect of the drug is to lessen irritability, and to diminish the secretions; in accordance with this, there was almost suspended action of the kidneys. At the period when the effects of the opium were in great force, it is true, that during the first eighteen or twenty hours, no deficiency was discovered, but she was, during that time, taking constantly very large quantities of diluents medicinally; after this time, forty-eight hours elapsed, in which there was no call; and we find in the female already spoken of, who had been accustomed to large doses, that uniformly while under their influence the secretion was scanty, but that it became abundant when the doses were considerably reduced.

The opinion that it is suppression, and not retention, appears to be strengthened by one part of the narrative of the opium-taker. She states that the difficulty she experienced in passing water was not the difficulty of pain, but the difficulty arising from deficiency. It was unaccompanied by sense of fulness, and when reverting to this phenomenon,

* Did not during the whole night feel the least disposition to stir even a finger, and says there was no fatigue produced by not moving. She thinks an opium-eater could rest if he was lying on a stone, and that he may go through any quantity of cold or hardship without taking cold.

in other parts of her statement, she says she did not suffer as if from distension.

The state of the skin also in Jones, as to perspiration, was what took place in the former patient.

We perceive in the case of Jones that the catamenia, which had never before varied as to time since their first occurrence, and were expected on the day after the dose was taken, sustained a delay of five days. In this case, indeed, the poison was taken at a time, and under circumstances, (so far as the former regularity was concerned,) peculiarly calculated to test the effect of opium in reference to that secretion. Yet the delay *may* have been the result of other causes, and it would require a succession of examples, equally well marked, to warrant a positive conclusion, the more especially as persons under the *habitual* use of opium do not generally experience interruptions; the uterine functions, in that respect, do not appear to have been influenced in the female who had been an habitual taker from her childhood, that is, from ten years of age upwards. They commenced in her case at the usual time, and proceeded many years quite naturally; the delay of two years, which afterwards took place, could not well be attributed to opium; had that delay been final, the question may have arisen, but at the end of two years the healthy state returned. We may remark in passing, that the climate of Greece does not appear to have influenced her constitution, so as to have occasioned a more early appearance of the secretion, or a greater abundance, to both of which the Greek women are liable. We have in our present patient (in accordance with what is so common as scarcely to require mention) rather persevering constipation; in the other case adverted to, this state alternated with diarrhoea, almost as regularly as she took opium or abstained from it. Even in her earliest opium days she had recourse to common salt, on account of the constipating effects of the opium.

Our patient Jones we found very commonly complaining of headache, and an opinion is very general that opium produces great congestion of the blood-vessels of the brain, and in this belief it has been stated that rupture of a blood-vessel on the brain is the cause of death. There is much reason to doubt whether great congestion of the cerebral vessels is so common as many suppose. There are indubitable instances of extravasation discovered after death, but such instances form the exception, not the rule. Indeed, according to Christison, it is a very rare effect; and if my recollection is not at fault, that author states that he never met with more than one good case. With reference to the state of the brain, moreover, it must not be forgotten that much will depend upon contingencies connected with the cessation of vital actions on this or that organ, independently of any direct influence of the opium on the brain. The mental condition of our patient, after the more overpowering operation of the opium had worn off, was characteristic of its ordinary effects, when taken under similar circumstances. She did not enjoy the agreeable and exhilarating effects which some persons habituated to the use of opium experience, but she passed into a negative state of neither pleasure nor pain; these were her terms, and they are very expressive, of the influence of opium in allaying the sensibility of the nervous system.

Opium has been differently described by different opium-takers, as to its influence on the mental appreciation of time; some awarding to it the power of almost incalculable extension, and others the power of extreme contraction. Our patient thought time long, that it passed very slowly; but we must take into consideration, that her constitution was new to its effects, and that she had been under the influence of a dose not apportioned to any particular degree of effect on the mind or on the feelings.

It occurs to me to mention that, in the treatment of this case, besides having the advantage of an early opportunity of applying the stomach-pump, we had the good fortune not to find the sensibility of the stomach so affected by the opium as to prevent the action of the sulphate of zinc. Vomiting fortunately was very free. The sulphate of zinc was preferred, because tartar emetic is more liable to be uncertain, and to fail in opium cases, (even in large doses, when small doses of the sulphate of zinc succeed,) and because the sulphas cupri, in the event of its not acting as an emetic, may be retained and act as a prejudicial irritant.

CASES

FROM THE EARLY NOTE-BOOKS OF THE LATE

SIR ASTLEY COOPER, BART.

EXTRACTED WITH PERMISSION OF B. B. COOPER, ESQ. F.R.S.

No. XII.

SYMPTOMS OF WATER IN THE PERICARDIUM.

MR. THOMAS — had water in the pericardium. His breathing was short, and he had a troublesome cough; his pulse was remarkably hard and very irregular; he was unable to lie down in bed, and often woke, starting in the night with a sense of suffocation, in which he called aloud; his countenance was bloated. Anasarca next appeared. The difficulty of breathing increased, and he awoke convulsively and frequently, whenever he attempted to sleep, from the oppression in his breath. His pulse was small, frequent, and intermittent, towards the close of life.

SYMPTOMS OF WATER ON ONE SIDE OF THE CHEST.

Mr. —, a sadler, has a pulse of about the natural frequency, but very irregular; it beats slowly for a few strokes, then rapidly, then slowly again. He has a frequent, strong, and dry cough; he is unable to lie on one side, for if he attempts it, a shortness of breath and most violent cough are immediately brought on; his legs swell, and are cold; his face is bloated; his head perspires constantly.

ABSCESSES UNDER A THICK CUTICLE.

Abscesses forming under a thick cuticle in the palm of the hands or fingers are very troublesome, if they are not opened at an early period of their formation.

Miss — had a corn in the second toe, which she removed violently; an abscess formed under the cuticle, attended with much pain, and the ab-