REMARKS ON THE USE OF COD-LIVER OIL IN JAIL CACHEXIA.

By CALEB ROSE, Esq., SWAFFHAM, NORFOLK.

FROM the extensive trial which has been given to cod-liver oil, the profession is now able to form an opinion of the value of this medicine in certain diseases; and I believe I am right in stating that those who have had large experience in the use of the oil esteem it a medicine of great utility. The diseases in which cod-liver oil has been found most beneficial are those which are termed scrofulous; and I have found it so useful in a particular form of scrofula, that I have thought it might not be uninteresting to record the result of my experience in this form of disease. The form of scrofula to which I allude is that to which prisoners are liable who have been for some considerable time confined in prison. Dr. Baly, in a very interesting article in the "Medico-Chirurgical Transactions," has shewn that amongst prisoners who undergo a long term of imprisonment there is a high rate of mortality from tubercular diseases. In the last seven years I have seen several cases of this scrofulous cachexia amongst the prisoners confined in the prison at Swaffham; and it appears to me to be different to the ordinary forms of scrofula met with in general practice. The men who have been the subjects of it have not been robust at the time of their entrance into the prison, but they were not at this time apparently suffering from scrofula, or any other disease. They had all been in prison six months before symptoms of scrofula appeared; most of them eight months; and their term of imprisonment was twelve months, and in one case, I think, two years. The symptoms of the disease are these:—The man is observed to look paler and thinner than usual; he is very much depressed in spirits; has no appetite for his food; sleeps badly at night, and at that time, also, frequently has profuse perspirations; there is slight diarrhoea; the pulse is quick, irritable, and feeble. With those symptoms, I have in every case found some of the cervical glands more or less enlarged, and, moreover, they continue to enlarge very rapidly. In the first five years three of the men died in prison, two of very rapid phthisis, (one of them of sudden and large hæmoptysis,) the third of tubercular peritonitis. The others who were seriously affected with this scrofula were discharged from prison before their proper time, and, I have since learned, recovered speedily after their liberation. Those who suffered in a minor degree were carried on to the end of their term of imprisonment by care and indulgence. Rather more than two years since we began to treat these cases with cod-liver oil, and with the best effects. As soon as a prisoner begins to show that marked deterioration of general health, which is so likely to end in the development of scrofula, he is put upon the oil; and in every case I have seen the man gain colour and flesh, and become restored to health. The two men who first took the oil had the cervical glands much enlarged, (in one of

them suppurating,) and as they had still to remain some months longer in prison it was thought that they must have been discharged before the end of their term; however, after taking the oil a month they improved steadily, and eventually left the prison at their proper time, in as good health as when they entered it. Since these two cases we have not had any so bad, as the oil has been administered in good time to those men who have shown and had deterioration of health, which appears to be the commencement of scrofula; and certainly their health has apparently been entirely restored by this valuable medicine.

Hospital Reports.

QUEEN'S HOSPITAL, BIRMINGHAM.

REPORTS OF CASES ADMITTED UNDER DR. DAVID NELSON.

Extracted from the Clinical Records,

BY W. J. MOORE, ESQ. M.R.C.S., AND L.A.C., RESIDENT
MEDICAL OFFICER.

CASE XII.

Case of Mary Ann Charlton, aged 36, temp. bilio-phlegmatic; affected with rheumatism and cardiac disease terminating in relief.

HISTORY.—October 24th, 1849.—This patient stated that about twelve months ago she had had a violent bowel complaint, preceded by pains in the stomach, to attacks of which she was still subject. She next began to complain of pain in the back, down the course of the spine, which in spite of treatment gradually grew worse, till at length it laid her in bed for some weeks prior to admission. She had also had rheumatic fever, which had affected her heart, and afterwards she observed a projection of the upper part of the sternum, which still remained; being led to believe she had a spinal complaint she sought the Queen's Hospital.

Symptoms.—On admission the face was pale and she lay helplessly on her back. The thyroid gland was observed to be much enlarged, and the upper part of the sternum projected. There was severe pain, much increased upon motion or pressure, along the whole spine from the cervical vertebræ to the sacrum, and also at the bulging part of the sternum, and along the tendinous expansions of the muscles of the neck, &c. She was subject to headache and sinking, but did not vomit. There were minor pains in all her joints but the urine was plentiful without any sediment. Pulse 140.

Diagnosis.—That there was enlargement of the heart and chronic rheumatism. Afterwards dilatation of the right auricle, or of the arch of the aorta, or of both.

Treatment.—This was begun with an attempt to subdue inflammatory action without weakening the patient, to amend the secretions, and drive blood from the part most affected.

R. Hab. Pulv. Colch., gr. iij; Extr. Hyosc., gr. ij;