the tubules, the product being degenerated epithelial cells and fibrinous casts. But, as I believe that in this acute form the proper tissue of the kidney is involved, if not the main seat, and that interstitial deposit takes place in it, as in the parotids and testicles, we may be safe in regarding the nephritic attack as an acute pathological congestion, and, as such, amenable to an anti-phlogistic treatment—a point of much practical import.

Albuminuria, a main diagnostic feature in the present case, occurs also in the other form of Bright's disease, named by Gluge *stearosis*, on account of the deposition of oil-globules, in the epithelial cells of the urine tubules; but this form, being chronic, does not bear on the subject under consideration.

The cerebral symptoms, regarded as arising from inflammation of the kidneys, and the consequent suppression of urine, would urge the necessity of vigilance during the course of a disease so prone to metastasis, and of attention particularly to the quantity of urine, as also to the testing of its character; and should the quantity prove to be slight, and albumen to be present, we should then not hesitate to abstract blood as the best means of arresting the threatened or existing nephritis, and of preventing the occurrence of cerebral symptoms. The abstraction of blood from a vein, and locally, is most essential, and next to it the use of diaphoretics; but mercury is admissible only as an alterative, general experience having shown that it aggravates rather than relieves, and on some occasions even produces the disease. It is important, moreover, that the surface of the body should be kept warm by suitable clothing, and that the temperature of the chamber should be regulated, especially in the cold season; and indeed, in every case of mumps, the patient should from the onset be confined to the house, exposure to vicissitudes of temperature being the frequent exciting cause of metastasis.

28, Brock Street, Bath,
October 1, 1851.

ON

THE TREATMENT OF HABITUAL OR CHRONIC CONSTIPATION.

By HENRY COLLETT, Esq., WORTHING.

HABITUAL or chronic constipation is one of the most common amongst the miseries of human life: it is a "thorn in the flesh" to thousands of sufferers, while also it is a source of revenue to a vast number of advertising vendors of antibilious, digestive, and other kinds of pills, the use of which serves but to increase the evils they profess to remove; the result is, that it becomes as necessary for the sufferers to resort to the daily use of pills as to eat food, to prevent all the physical and mental disquietude consequent upon dyspepsia from constipation. But this is not the whole of my reason for bringing the subject under notice.

The cases which I shall relate will prove that many of the first authorities in our own faculty, in my humble opinion, have overlooked one of the most frequent causes of the complaint under consideration, and have failed in affording relief, while the very simple treatment which I propose, founded upon what I believe to be this cause, has been most successful and gratifying both to the patients and myself. Having been a sufferer myself I can speak the more feelingly upon my subject, for "*haud ignarus mali miseri succurrere disco*," and I feel satisfied, should the treatment be generally adopted where constipation, independent of organic causes exists, the habit of daily medicating would be entirely superseded.

Case 1.—Mrs. B., an interesting young woman, aged 23, married, with one child, consulted me under the following circumstances:—She was in every other respect perfectly healthy, but for three years had not been able to pass a motion without the aid of medicine. Sometimes the evacuations were scybalous, sometimes more or less fluid, but always scanty and void of proper form. Several attempts had been made to allow nature to perform her office, but obstinate constipation and much nervous and miserable discomfort were the invariable effects. Aperients and the enema were her only comforters. I learnt that she had consulted several eminent physicians and practitioners in Paris, in London, and in the provinces. All gave her some favourite aperient, until at last one told her that nothing but a miracle could cure her. Such were the unpromising features of the cases that I scarcely ventured to prescribe, but having my own case as a precedent I tried the plan here. I prevailed upon her to promise to discontinue all aperient medicines for a week, to leave off the use of white bread, entirely to eat brown bread (made of wheat meal, only partially sifted, for some is made of rye which I do not recommend) and drink a glass of cold spring water the last thing at night, and in the morning immediately on rising. She ridiculed my advice, but adopted it. The first day past and no evacuation, but the second day gave birth to a large well-formed stool, which gave feelings of comfort and satisfaction, to which she had been a stranger for years, and every day after she had a daily relief up to the time of leaving this neighbourhood, four months after the date of commencing the treatment, during which time she took only one dose of castor oil, because she thought herself bilious, but steadily pursued the diet recommended,

Case 2.—Mr. A., habitually constipated and constantly taking aperients for years past, adopted the plan above recommended, now passes large and healthy evacuations daily, without straining or any effort, and expresses himself so much relieved that he is recommending the remedy to numerous friends. On mentioning it to a physician of eminence, an intimate friend of his, his reply was,—“Oh! you are rasping your inside;” an explanation of the plan, which in the sequel, I hope to prove erroneous.

Case 3.—Mr. G., an artist, who came here in very delicate health, had for years suffered constipation, and taken aperients for many years at least three times a week, had consulted three eminent professional men in London, besides others, and at the time I saw him had taken the senna mixture every morning for three weeks, looked haggard, and care worn. I told him my plan and the success I had met with, which he followed. A month has passed, and he has not required any further aperient, having passed daily one or two large evacuations, and he is now looking comparatively healthy. I should mention that the rectum was in such an irritable state as to create great suffering with every motion. This has quite left him.

In Dr. Copland's Dictionary, eight causes are mentioned for constipation. I shall not state them, but refer to the work (Art.—*Constipation*) for the information. The one cause above-mentioned is not found among them, viz., imperfect distension of the intestine, (I am supposing that all the collateral functions are healthy,) and this I believe to be the most common cause of constipation.

When the physiology of the intestine is duly considered, it will be evident that certain conditions are necessary for the performance of its healthy functions, and these are specially a certain degree of distension by fecal matter, and that of such a semi-solid nature as to be easily pressed by the contracting action of the gut. If the fecal remains of digested aliment is so small as not to cause sufficient distension, or supposing the bowel distended sufficiently, but the contents so hard as not to be impressed by its peristaltic contractile action,* none or little onward movement will take place.

The diet of the English consists of white bread, meat, in larger or smaller quantities, and vegetables, mostly potatoes, &c., and much activity in the functions of digestion; for instance, "abundance of gastric juice," "active absorbent powers," added to the easy solubility of the above-named ingesta, may co-operate in preventing the "conditions" above alluded to, not affording sufficient excrementitious matter.

Now, it appears to me the effect of brown bread is to meet this difficulty. The portion of bran it contains is insoluble, and forms a frame work of the large fecal formation invariably following upon its use, enabling the bowel to act naturally, and in addition, stimulating the exhalents mechanically, whereby an extra quantity of mucus is thrown out to assist its propulsion; also clearing the mouth of the lacteals, thus completing the operation of digestion in a healthy manner.

To meet the vulgar prejudices against the use of brown bread, viz, that it is less nourishing than white, I need merely state that the Scotch and North of England people, who are the strongest in our island, eat oatmeal, and that brown bread is nothing more or less than wheat meal, and I quote the following article on this subject from the *Lancet*, Feb. 10, 1849, shewing that there are "*nutritive properties in bran*:"

* Or as Blumenbach calls it, its undulatory contracting motion.

"M. Millon has communicated to the Academy of Sciences the result of some interesting investigations of his concerning the ligneous matter of wheat; whence it would appear that "bran" is a very nutritive substance. Though bran, doubtless, contains from five to six per cent. more ligneous substance than flour, it presents more nitrogenous matter, twice as much fatty matter, and, moreover, two distinct aromatic principles, one of which presents the fragrance of honey; and these are both wanting in flour. Thus (by sifting) impoverishing wheat in nitrogenous matter, fat fecula, aromatic and sapid principles, in order to free it from a small proportion of ligneous substance.

M. Millon, therefore, thinks that bran and meal ought to be ground over again, and mixed with the pure flour; and he has found, by repeated experiments, that this mixture yields a superior kind of bread, and free from the inconveniences of that bread which in some countries, and particularly in Belgium, is made with coarse meal.

I conclude this paper with another quotation extracted from an admirable article published in the *Lancet*, Dec. 19, 1846, by Dr. Robert Dick, on the use of bread. He says:—"The use of fine bread and the systematic exclusion of all *excrementitious non-assimilable* ingredients from our articles of diet, is nothing else than an attempt, as it were, to dispense with four-fifths or more of the alimentary canal—a long and important line of excretion meant to be continually active; and the torpor of, and the withholding from which its appropriate stimulus, (to wit, the excrementitious parts of our food,) cannot but be attended, sooner or later, with serious evils."

CASE OF OVARIAN TUMOUR.

COMMUNICATED BY W. H. BAINBRIGGE, Esq.,
LIVERPOOL.

To the Editor of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

SIR,—The following is the substance of a communication sent to me descriptive of a case of ovarian tumour. As it involves points of much practical importance, I deem it desirable to publish it, together with my answer.

Having previously drawn the attention of the profession to this subject, I would take the opportunity of expressing my regret for having remained so long silent, as I feel that my medical brethren are justly entitled to the results of those cases which have subsequently come under my own immediate care and management.

I remain, Sir, yours very faithfully,
W. H. BAINBRIGGE.

Liverpool, 3, Islington Square,
September 18, 1851.

" * * * The history of her case was as follows:—She first discovered a tumour in the right