XIV.

Observations, with Cases of Tic Douloureux, and Rheumatism of the Head, successfully treated by the Carbonate of Soda and the Prussic Acid. By THOMAS TAYLOR, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. Cricklade, Wilts.

THE attention of the Profession has lately been a good deal engaged by that hitherto intractable disease, called *Tic Douloureux*; and the most successful treatment appears to be that of Mr Hutchinson, with the carbonate of iron; but even that remedy has required a great length of time to overcome the disease, and entirely to remove it. Nevertheless, he has been able to conquer it, and the public are much indebted to him for his perseverance. The few remarks which I have to offer, are elicited by the success I have met with in treating, not only *tic douloureux*, but another very painful disorder, very nearly allied to it in its pathology, viz. *clavus hystericus*, or rheumatism of the head. Indeed, I think there is no doubt but that they are frequently mistaken for each other; and many cases published as legitimate cases of *tic douloureux*, appear to be, on close inspection, severe rheumatic cases, and which are perhaps equally difficult of cure. This is immaterial, provided some are real cases, and the treatment of those equally successful. The first case was entirely cured by the treatment recommended by Mr Abernethy in his Lectures, for some years past. The second and fourth cases, which were treated by the Prussic acid, were certainly rheumatism, and required much longer time to be removed; the second has not returned since the use of the acid. The fourth case, that of a young lady, did not yield so readily as the second. I much wished her to have used the warm bath, in conjunction with the other remedies, as it was of such decided benefit to her brother (case second), by which means she probably would have lost her complaint much earlier, as I consider rheumatism, as well as *tic douloureux*, to arise from irritability of the whole nervous system, becoming apparently concentrated in one particular part, and kept up and increased by disorders of the digestive organs.

That *tic douloureux* is a disease, or what Mr Abernethy more properly calls a disorder dependant on irritability or nervous excitement, I think there can be no doubt; and that it should be kept up, or even increased, by disorder of the diges-

tive organs, I think every one must admit. We are all aware of the sympathy which exists between different organs, and also of general sympathy from disorder of any particular organ; we cannot then, surely, be surprised to find a complaint of the nervous system excited and kept up by the disorder of an organ of such universal sympathy as the stomach; nor can we be surprised to find those diseases disappear when the stomach has regained its healthy action. This is sometimes the case in the diseases under consideration, and we need do nothing more than to put it into a good state of health. This would be the first indication in all cases; but, where the disease has existed any length of time, it will require to be acted on by that class of medicines which we know to possess a power of controlling excessive nervous action, and which has generally been called "nervous" medicines, but which I should be more disposed to call sedative medicines. The kinds of sedative medicines in general use, I am well aware, have little or no control over the diseases in question; it therefore behoves us to seek the aid of other medicines, which we are informed possess similar properties. Many new substances have lately been introduced into the practice of medicine with varied success; and we are indebted to Dr Granville for his Translation of Dr Magendie's paper on the use of Prussic Acid, inserted in the Journal of the Royal Institution, as it has greatly called the attention of medical men to that most useful preparation. I have used it, for the last four years, in a great variety of cases, both pulmonary and stomachic, but in none with such decided advantage as in the diseases above mentioned, namely, tic douloureux and rheumatism of the head. In these it appears to possess almost the properties of a specific; indeed I have never seen one instance wherein it has failed, when properly attended to; producing almost immediate relief, and removing entirely the complaint. In two cases only of tic douloureux have I known the disease to return after its use; and each case was at the distance of a twelvemonth. By having recourse again to the medicine, it was immediately and permanently cured, at least to the present time, now nearly two years since the last attack in each case. The following cases, I presume, will satisfactorily show the value of the medicine in this class of disorders; and will, I hope, induce other practitioners to give it a fair trial.

Cricklade, February 1823.

CASE I.—June 1818. Miss — has suffered a great deal for some years past with unequivocal symptoms of tic douloureux, af-

fecting principally the *portio dura* of the seventh pair, but in a less degree the whole of the nerves on the left side the face, occurring in violent paroxysms for some minutes, two or three times a day for several weeks, when it leaves her, and she is free from it for some months; when it has again returned, and gone through much the same course. She had been recommended a variety of different medicines, anodynes, blisters, stimulating and sedative liniments, &c. with only trifling benefit. I however gave her hopes of being able to get quite rid of it, and recommended the carbonate of soda in drachm doses, combined with five grains of ext. conii in cinnamon water, twice a day. From the use of this medicine, which acts as a gentle aperient, she found very great benefit; and, by following it up for three weeks, she got quite well. She has found a little return of it once or twice since; but, by having recourse to the medicine, it invariably carries it off in two or three days.

CASE II.—Mr — aged 35, of a spare habit of body, but who had always enjoyed good health previous to the summer of 1818, when he experienced an attack of jaundice. This complaint was soon removed, but it left considerable derangement of the chylopoietic viscera, to which he was not very attentive. On the 10th of November 1818, he had a severe attack of *clavus hystericus* of the left side of the head, the paroxysms occurred periodically every twenty-four hours, and deprived him almost entirely of sleep; he was nervous and irritable, with loss of appetite, and general derangement of health; an emetic was premised, and afterwards the sodæ carbonas in drachm doses, combined with ext. conii gr. v., was taken twice a day. In a few days he was much relieved, and by the end of November the complaint had quite left him. In the following March he had a return of pain, but it was not quite similar to what he felt in his first attack; it occurred in the left side of the head and face, darting through the head in different directions, particularly across the forehead. The pain in the face was more steady; it occurred in paroxysms, particularly in the evening; he could get no sleep, his appetite gone, his bowels costive, slight thirst, tongue covered with brown fur, with quick and small pulse. March 18th, *capiat h. s. pil. ex hydr. submuriat. pulv. antim. ā gr. iij. et primo mane haust. aperiens cum inf. sennæ, potassæ tartrat., &c.* On the 20th he was better; his bowels had acted well, but skin hot and dry. *Cap. h. s. pulv. ipecac. comp. ℥j. aq. ammon. ℥ss. Aq. menth. sat. ℥j. M. ft. haust.*; use the pendiluvium in going to bed. 23d, Has perspired a good deal since the draught, and feels better. Has a wish to try the soda draughts, which was complied with; in addition to which, he took *gtt. v. sol. arsenicalis bis in die*. He continued this medicine a fortnight, but did not experience that relief from it which he before found. At the same time, the state of his bowels was attended to. He has several decayed teeth, to which he thinks his complaint owing; but he has so much irritability of the nervous system, that he cannot command sufficient resolution to have them extracted. He is much better some

days, but change of weather invariably makes him worse. He was now advised to make use of the warm bath three times a week, from which he experienced very considerable relief. His purgatives were continued twice a week, and the solution of arsenic twice a day, until the 16th of April, when, although very much better, the pain did not appear at all inclined to leave him, and he was still very irritable and unfit for business. I therefore determined to try what effect the Prussic acid would have on the complaint. A friend going to Bristol procured some for me; but not being quite satisfied as to its mode of preparation, I was very cautious in administering it. I accordingly began with only half a drop, in divided doses, in twenty-four hours, increasing the dose one drop every day, until the eighth, when he took six drops in the same space of time. He no sooner began the medicine, than he found his head better, although he began with such minute doses;—and he improved under its use so rapidly, that it was not necessary to continue it after the eleventh. Not having felt the least pain since the sixth day, he slept well, his appetite returned, and his health appeared completely restored.

CASE III.—Mr — in the early part of the year 1819, was seized with a violent paroxysm of pain, affecting the infra-orbital nerve, whilst eating his dinner, which was so severe, that he could not put a bit more of any thing into his mouth. He happened to be dining with me, and I immediately gave him a drachm of the carbonate of soda, with five grains of ext. conii, in cinnamon water. This draught gave him immediate ease, and he did not find any thing more of it until the following August, when he was again affected in a similar manner. It now continued several days, but never affected him during his other meals. He had recourse to the soda and hemlock, which again relieved him. It returned again, however, the next month, and again was removed by the same means; no external remedies were used. After this, he continued well till the following August (11 months), when he had another attack, which continued several days, before he applied for relief. I had now experienced the good effect of the acid, and immediately gave him two drops three times a day;—he took the medicine only six days when he was quite well, and has had no attack since.

CASE IV.—May 22, 1819. Miss — has had a violent pain of the left side of the head and face, for the last ten days, the pain darting through her head similar to Case II.; but the least cool air blowing on her face, produced a violent paroxysm, which obliged her to keep entirely within, and to have her face constantly covered; has been using fomentations, blisters, &c., without any benefit. This case occurring so soon after the last, I was anxious to see what effect the acid would have, before the complaint could be at all broken in upon by other medicines. I accordingly began giving it in doses of two drops *per diem*, increasing the dose gradually one drop each day, till she took five. The medicine was taken nine days only, when she had lost all pain, and felt completely well. In the following October, she had a

return of it, which did not yield so readily. She took the acid a month, and the dose was gradually augmented to twenty-four drops per diem. (This is by much the largest dose I have ever found it necessary to give since.) However, she got completely well, and has had no return whatever of it since. Had she consented to the use of the warm bath, I have no doubt it would have materially assisted the cure.

CASE V.—Mrs ——. May 14, 1820, the last two days has been attacked, in the afternoon, with violent paroxysms of pain, affecting principally the left inferior maxillary nerve, although all the nerves on that side the face participate in the affection. The paroxysms were of short duration. She was directed to take the carbonate of soda, with the extractum conii; but this medicine not taking that immediate effect which it usually does, I gave her, on the 15th, two drops of the prussic acid, in divided doses, every twenty-four hours. She took the acid four days, when she was quite relieved. On the 2d of July 1821, she experienced another attack. She took the medicine in the same doses eight days, when she was completely well, and has had no return since.

CASE VI.—Mrs C —, June 18th, 1820, came into the Surgery apparently in the greatest agony. Indeed she paced the room for several minutes, before she could communicate to me the cause of her suffering; and I conjectured some serious accident had happened to some of her children, so great was her distress at the time. When it had a little gone off, she informed me she had a most violent pain at the left side of the lower jaw, which she thought would drive her out of her senses, as she had these attacks every afternoon for nearly the last week, equally as violent as the one she had just experienced. It being confined to the inferior maxillary nerve, she considered it owing to her teeth, which I examined to satisfy her, and found them perfectly sound. I consoled her, however, in promising her relief in a very short time. She being otherwise in good health, I immediately began giving her the prussic acid, in divided doses of six drops in the day, and increasing the dose one drop each day, for four days only, when she was quite well. The medicine was continued a few days, by way of preventing any return, and she has had no attack since.

CASE VII.—1821, December. Mrs P — has had a great deal of pain occasionally on the right side of her face, extending from the ear underneath the eye, and down the neck. It comes on every afternoon, and continues, with slight intermissions, the whole evening. She has had it every day for the last week. She began with five drops of the prussic acid, in divided doses, each day. In less than a week she was quite well. Her greatest dose was six drops only in twenty-four hours. No attack since.

The above cases are the first in rotation, as they occurred, of many others, which have been treated equally successful.