

## Medical and Physical Journal.

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To Dr. B A T T Y.

DEAR SIR,

I Beg the favor of a place in your Journal, to answer, and endeavour to rectify, some misapprehensions contained in the letter of Mr. Wilkinson upon Fractures. The pains which that gentleman has taken to gratify the public, respecting my queries, and the handsome manner he adopts, deserve a respectful notice. Without any desire to occupy your Journal in trifling controversy, I trust Mr. Wilkinson and your readers may feel satisfied with the following explanations.

First, My observations were quite general, and the cases related, only intended as points from whence the principal queries should issue.

Secondly, The leading question, requiring to be answered, was, On what local circumstances, or state of constitution, does the deficiency of hardening matter (phosphat of lime) depend, in cases of imperfect union in fractures generally?

Mr. Wilkinson seems to have returned those incidents upon me, which were related among the prominent features of the three cases, and has pressed them forward as sufficient causes of the phenomena; this is only carrying the argument farther than I thought necessary.

The sailor's case was that which he alludes to, and admits of all the conjectures applied to it; although neither symptoms of scurvy, nor mollities ossium in the other bones, were present; and I believe that Mr. I. Hunter had agreed with Mr. Lynn about the probable success of his operation.

When I stated that no decided inference can be drawn from these cases, as to the certain causes of such misfortunes, I did not mean to comprehend those in which the inferences were already so far drawn by myself. I intended to solicit further information from the relation of more cases, so that surgeons might be able to judge, a priori, of the chances which might favour the defective union of broken bones.

The carpenter's case was only described to convey the general effect of its character; his fore-arm rested in a sling at right angles with the upper-arm, and the bone of the fractured brachea was kept strait by splints and bandages. Whilst the

broken part of the arm continued straight and free from pain, I judged it in a favourable condition for union; nor did I at all suspect that the tone of the muscles had so far ceased as to admit of that separation by the weight of the lower arm, which would prevent the union. I related those facts to caution others against those hopes, and that ideal security which disappointed me in this instance, and which I believe would have taken the same course in every other practitioner's hands. The reader will perceive, that in all the leading points Mr. Wilkinson and I do not differ, although on the subject of depletion we may vary in the general acceptance.

That inflammation is one of the consequences of fractures to be managed with nice attention, every one must agree. To regulate the degree and course of this natural process, by means of medicine, diet, &c. every one must also assent, but the young practitioner will generally find more occasion to fear the excesses than the deficiencies of inflammation.

Old habits may in some instances be connived at, but a man should consult the records before he grants licences of this kind. These are, however, digressions from the subject of imperfect union in fractures. The soldier was advised to undergo an operation for the removal of the splinter, but it was postponed. Should the enquiries which I have put forth, and the remarks of your worthy correspondent, lead surgeons to avert, in any solitary instance, the misfortune of a disunited fracture, by looking to the causes already assigned, or by fixing on more just and more philosophical causes, the objects of my enquiry will be answered. The same motives and the same satisfaction cannot fail to prove the reward of Mr. Wilkinson's labours.

Soho Square,  
November 5, 1801.

I am, DEAR SIR, &c.

A. CARLISLE.

*Observations on the Effects of Opium applied externally.*  
By M. WARD, Surgeon to the Manchester Infirmary.

“ In the introduction of new modes of treatment, it is incumbent on the medical practitioner, to be sedulously cautious, not only that he founds his trials on just analogies, but that he conducts them with impartiality, and records, with faithfulness, their good or ill success.”

*Medical and Physical Journal, for July, 1799, p. 445.*

IN the latter part of my first paper on the effects of Opium applied externally, I took the liberty of suggesting such inference