

To the Editors of the Medical and Physical Journal.

GENTLEMEN,

TWO years have elapsed since I published a short account of a case of Cancer then under treatment, in which the solution of white arsenic appeared to have acted as an *anodyne*. That case, as might be expected, proved fatal, but the remedy did not disappoint my prediction. I have now a second patient under a course of the same remedy, where my expectations respecting it have been fully realized. The subject is a woman, in the fifty-third year of her age, whose left breast, adherent to the pectoral muscle, and in a cancerous state, together with a large cluster of indurated glands in the axilla, I extirpated in March last. The integuments covering a part of the breast had become diseased, so that union by the first intention could not be accomplished. Nevertheless, the parts healed completely, and for several weeks she continued apparently well. The return of the disease was then manifested by a small vesication, which terminated in a painful ulcer, about the size of her finger nail, in the middle of the cicatrix formed by the operation, and by painful indurations surrounding it, and in the course of the absorbents leading to the axilla on the same side. With the disease slowly advancing, she suffered for several weeks longer before she applied again for help, when she complained of pain all over the ulcerated surface, and particularly in the knots, especially when pressed.

She had been forewarned of the probable recurrence of the disease, owing to the too long delay of the operation, which was performed with proper regard to every circumstance of candour and caution.

On the 14th of July, when I first put her upon the use of the mineral solution, the ulceration was extending itself rapidly, and the pain all over the surface of the ulcer was constant and very severe, as well as in the indurated parts. She had not taken it more than nine days, in doses of twelve drops, three times a day, before she thought the pain sensibly decreased. To the ulcer itself, the ung. ceræ cum opio was directed; but as, after a sufficient trial, she thought the pain aggravated by it, the infus. cicutæ was substituted, as in the former case.

It is now upwards of six months since she began the use of the arsenical solution, which has been taken in the above doses with great regularity till within a few days. This suspension of it has been recommended on account of a pain in the head, and of an uneasiness in her stomach, both of which she ascribes



to a monthly constitutional change now not outwardly marked; and as they had nearly subsided this morning, I am inclined to favour her opinion of the cause. Notwithstanding the ulcerated parts had so long ceased to be painful, the cicatrization was not much advanced till she came into the Infirmary, where she was a second time admitted an in-patient, under the cancer-plan, on the 12th of January, 1801.

There is now very little ulceration, and the skinning is still progressively advancing; the pain too, which is not constant, is confined to the knots, some of which are inflamed, and going to exfoliate. In Graham's case it will be recollected, that this was the source of pain, after she had for some time taken the arsenical solution.

I have purposely compressed the recital of this case, and confined myself to the leading points of it; but it must be again observed, that the ulceration was considerable, and very painful.

The drops were at first taken in a little water, but, on account of their seeming to disagree with her stomach, it was changed for pepper-mint-water, which at that time had the desired effect. Latterly, she has been allowed four ounces of red wine daily; in other respects, she has taken only the common diet of the house.

No opium has been administered, though, when the functions of the stomach were disturbed, I thought it indicated, lest its exhibition should throw any ambiguity over the result; however, I am disposed to think that it may become necessary, to enable her to bear the mineral solution in proper doses. Henceforward, I shall not scruple to employ it, should the symptoms require its use, in conjunction with the drops. And should chronic general inflammation, which has been said to attend the long continued exhibition of arsenic, be excited, but which I have not seen, the digitalis offers a resource admirably calculated to repress it.

These are the several means by which, in the present instance, I propose to combat this formidable disease.

Partial success has already attended my endeavours, and I expect not to accomplish a cure. Among the multiplicity of nostrums for cancer, vaunted by empirics, arsenic is probably the active ingredient; it was formerly much employed, but had, I believe, been discarded from regular practice. My own experience proves it to be safe, when cautiously administered; for I have given it, in another disease, to a child of fifteen months old, and with success.

Your judicious readers will form their own conclusions from my two cases: My own are;—



1. That arsenic does diminish pain, and promote the healing of an ulcerated cancer;
2. That it may be safely administered, in proper doses, for a great length of time, without endangering life, or even exciting any of those alarming symptoms which have been said to attend its continued exhibition.

This brief notice you will oblige me by laying before the public, from whom, consistently with my own feelings for the sufferings of those who may be afflicted with Cancer, I could not any longer withhold it.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Manchester, 7th Feb. 1801.

W. SIMMONS.

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*A Case, which proves the Advantage of bringing on premature Labour in a distorted Patient.*

THE publication of Mr. Barlow's cases on "a mode of practice which has been successfully adopted, in cases of distortion of the pelvis in pregnant women," has met with that attention from the public, which, from its importance to the interests of mankind, might have been expected. At the time of publishing, his own practice would have furnished him with more cases in point; but, I believe, he thought those sufficient to prove the propriety of employing the means which he has recommended. There can be no objection, however, to have it confirmed by the experience of others; and this is done most satisfactorily by the following case, that was transmitted to me this morning by Mr. Hardman, a respectable surgeon at Bolton, where Mr. Barlow resides.

To Mr. SIMMONS, Surgeon, at Manchester.

Dear Sir,

During the absence of our friend, Mr. Barlow, I at different times attended several of his patients for him, whose cases he has published; and was by those convinced of the utility of bringing on premature labour in distorted patients. The case I am about to describe, is the first that has occurred on my own account; with the result of which, I flatter myself, you would wish to be informed, as it clearly proves to me, that this mode of exciting delivery supercedes all cruel operations.

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