

of the nervous system, or by the increase of any secretion, electricity is frequently beneficial.

Electricity must be regarded as a medicine whose properties are not as yet well ascertained, and whose effects on different constitutions not as yet determined;—such require the united observations of many individuals, before its influence on our organization can be properly known. On this account, those cases where it fails should be particularised, as well as those where it succeeds. Such is the plan I shall presume to adopt with whatever cases I may send for insertion to the Medical and Physical Journal.

CASE I.—*Hydrocele cured by Electricity.*

About eight months ago, a gentleman applied to me respecting an hydrocele, with a view of trying electricity. The testis was enlarged, and apprehended to be so diseased, that any operation for its radical cure was no ways advisable. For two months I tried the effects of the electricity, without producing any other alteration than a diminution in the size of the testis; the dropsical accumulation appeared in some respects to be increased. He permitted me to puncture the scrotum with a small trochar. On the day after this operation, electricity was again had recourse to—a half-pint bottle, the electrometer at three-eighths of an inch. Shocks of this intensity, beginning at fifty, and gradually increasing to two hundred, were daily sent through the affected part: in the course of two months, the testis was reduced to the same size with the other. Electricity was suspended: no further tendency to accumulation has appeared.

N. B. Whenever the machine is not particularised, it is to be understood that a two-feet plate machine of Cuthbertson's was made use of; when any other size or form is employed, such will be particularised, as such very materially influences the intensity.

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*To the Editors of the Medical and Physical Journal.*

GENTLEMEN,

IN the fifth Number of your Journal for July, p. 509, I observe that you notice musk, and sal cornu cervi volatilis, in equal proportions, as a new and efficacious remedy in sphacelus, particularly in that species of it “which is accompanied with convulsive symptoms, and has arisen from local external injury;” and you refer to a treatise on that subject, supposed to have been written by a Mr. C. WHITE, of York.

Permit me to acquaint you, that you have been misinformed relative to the author of the treatise alluded to; Mr. C. WHITE, of Manchester, having first promulgated to the world an account of that remedy in the year 1790, in a pamphlet entitled "*Observations on Gangrenes and Mortifications, accompanied with, or occasioned by, convulsive spasms, or arising from local injury, producing irritation.*"

Mr. White, however, was not the discoverer of the efficacy of musk and volatile salt in such cases, for the merit of the discovery is due to the late Dr. DARBEY, who casually hit upon it, in the treatment of a patient belonging to one of the other surgeons of the establishment, while he resided at the Manchester Infirmary, in the capacity of apothecary and house-surgeon.

In the same year in which Mr. White published his pamphlet, and very soon after its publication, Dr. Darbey graduated at Glasgow, and he made choice of this subject for his thesis; the title of which is "*Dissertatio Medica quædam de moschi et salis alk. volat. usu in febre nervosa et gangrena proponens.*"

Since that time, musk and volatile alkali combined, have been a good deal used in gangrene and sphacelus, by some practitioners resident in this place, and I suppose with success, as the practice is still continued; but as I have found the bark to answer very generally in gangrene and mortification, I have had no experience of it myself.

I have been induced to send you this communication, in consequence of your remark, that "the effects of this medicine are stated to be such as deserve the greatest attention of practitioners; but we do not find that it has been generally employed, unless by foreign practitioners, who speak of it in the highest terms of commendation;" and also to do justice to the memory the real author of the discovery, the history of which I have often heard him relate.

MANCHESTER, July 22d, 1799.

W. SIMMONS.