

sores, I could perceive they had begun to fill up with granulations and looked healthy. He declared to me he had taken no medicine for them, and as they were apparently getting better, I merely gave him some mild ointment to be applied to them. The irritable state of the sores when he first perceived them, soon brought on a swelling in the groin, and matter could be evidently felt under the skin. I gave him a blistering plaster to be put over the whole tumor, with an intention of exciting if possible the absorbents to take up the matter, and avoid its discharging, this had the desired effect. He got well without the use of mercury, and remained so for several months, when I last saw him.

Barnstable, 19th May, 1819.

Case of Poison by Arsenic. By Dr. BENJAMIN PAGE, Jr.

[Communicated for the New England Journal of Medicine and Surgery.]

I WAS called on Saturday evening, 13th of May last, to visit Mrs. Gilman, who became suddenly ill after tea; three cups is her usual quantity, but this evening it tasted so disagreeably she took but two. I saw her about fifteen minutes after she had swallowed the last cup.

She complained of a burning sensation in the stomach, griping pain in the bowels, trembling and numbness of the limbs, dizziness and confusion of the head, tingling pains in the eyes and face, dryness of the tongue and fauces, sudden flushings of heat. She had had one dejection before my arrival.

Gave ipecac. gr. xx. sulph. cup. gr. vi. which produced two speedy evacuations. Fifteen minutes afterwards she took tart. antim. gr. v. ipecac. gr. x. which was followed by two more ejections. After waiting fifteen or twenty minutes longer, sulph. zinci gr. xji. were taken and operated powerfully. Large and repeated draughts of warm water were given during the operation of the emetics. She was ordered to drink lean broth, and very freely of warm milk and water, with honey, in which was dissolved some carbonate of potass.

14th. Symptoms as yesterday with a little abatement of the burning in the stomach. Pulse quick and irregular; complains of lancinating pains in the head and breasts—dysuria, and tenesmus—bowels open.

Ordered barley water and gum-arabic broth, and clear milk with honey to be taken liberally.

15th. Passed a quiet night but without much sleep—had a rigor this morning and another in the evening; head hot, tongue thickly coated white; heat, soreness and swelling of the throat; difficult deglutition—face bloated and about the color of mahogany—the peculiar tingling sensation remains in and below the eyes.

Ordered olei. ricini. ʒj. the forehead and temples to be bathed with cold water, continue the mucilaginous drinks—tinct. opii. camph. ʒiss. at night.

16th. All symptoms rather milder except the heat and pain in the bowels, for which an injection of a pint of barley water with gum arabic was ordered. Olei Ricini. ʒj. to be taken soon after, and tinct. opii. camph. ʒiss. at night. Continue the medicines as before, with the addition of white soap boiled in water.

17th. Better. Purple spots on the body and arms, complains occasionally of faintness, and a prickly sensation in the skin—numbness and pain in the left arm and elbow, soreness and pungent pains about the heart—margin of the tongue clean and of a bright red—pulse quick and feeble.

Continue medicines as yesterday omitting the paregoric.

18th. Find her setting up in bed, much better, though complains at times of palpitation of the heart, trembling at the stomach and faintness: pulse 94 and stronger—some heat in the stomach and bowels—pain, and impaired vision of the right eye. Carb. lig. ʒss. to be taken in divided doses during the day in a cup of barley water and gum arabic.

19th. Took a dose of castor oil last evening, which produced three dejections this morning. She was pretty well during the greater part of the day, but, having no medicines and but little nourishment, became more indisposed towards evening, had a slight rigor, pulse feeble and irregular, pain in her jaws, teeth, left breast and thighs—some heat in the stomach and numbness, mind gloomy but not wandering; this aggravation of symptoms is in some measure to be attributed to an ungrounded apprehension that more poison had been put into her barley water.

A teaspoonful of carbon afforded almost immediate relief. Tinct. opii. camph. ʒiss. ordered to be taken at bed time—broth, milk, and barley water to be continued, and carbon occasionally.

20th. Much better, pains of yesterday have generally subsided, pulse 80, tongue getting clean, some heat in the bowels.

Repeat the injection of barley water and gum arabic, carb. lig. a teaspoonful every three hours, milk, broth, and barley water as before.

21st. Passed a comfortable night and very evidently convalescent. Carb. lig. cont.

22d. So far recovered that I took leave of her, ordering the carbon to be taken occasionally for a day or two.

The symptoms of this case lead me immediately to declare it as my opinion, that the poison this woman had taken was that of arsenic. Upon inquiry I found that the tea had been made without scalding the teapot, and a small piece of biscuit was found floating on its surface. The leaves had been thrown away before my arrival, but as the pot had not been rinsed, I directed some more to be made in it for the purpose of analysis. This analysis was made by Dr. C. Robbins of Boston and my son who applied a variety of tests, particularly those of Bergman and Marcet, and confirmed all my suspicions that it contained arsenic. Tea from the same paper had been drank several days previous to this accident, and has been since used without the least bad effect; and from existing circumstances we cannot avoid the painful conclusion, that this substance was placed on the bit of biscuit, and designedly thrown into the teapot in the course of the afternoon by some individual, whose intentions could not have been altogether of the most amiable or benevolent nature.

Two facts worth remembering may be gathered from this case.

1st. That an aqueous solution of arsenic produces that peculiar tingling sensation in the eyes and face, which is the effect of *Fowler's* solution, and which is considered a mark that the system is under the influence of that virulent poison. 2d. That carbon affords speedy and effectual relief of some of the symptoms which remain after the ordinary evacuations in such cases have been produced.

It is not a little remarkable that of a family consisting of nine individuals, who are in the habit of meeting three times every day around the same table, so many should have escaped the fate of the mother. The husband had not returned from his day's labor; five of the children had accepted, but a short time before, an invitation to take tea with a neighbouring family, the eldest daughter and a little boy were at home; of these, the former seldom drinks tea and perceiving a disagreeable taste in a table-spoonfull which she took, was in no way tempted to deviate from her usual custom. This small quantity however was not altogether inert; she was affected much like her mother, and her face exhibited the same dark colour, but all her symptoms were proportionably light and lasted but about forty-eight hours. The little boy had a cup of tea turned out for him, but by some lucky accident upset the whole before he had tasted it, and to punish

him for his carelessness his mother refused to replenish it ; never was punishment more happily bestowed, and never were circumstances more happily combined, than in preserving this family from the wicked designs of jealousy and malice.

Hallowell, May 29, 1820.

A Case of Imperforate Vagina, which terminated fatally.

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[Communicated for the New England Journal of Medicine and Surgery.]

I GIVE you the following imperfect relation of a case which occurred a short time since, in the circle of my practice that you may publish it, or make remarks upon it as you shall deem expedient.

Near the middle of February, I was called to visit Miss — aged 17, found her apparently in the first stage of a common catarrhal fever, and made use of the usual remedies ; but her recovery was slow, and I soon began to suspect some morbid affection of the system that had hitherto escaped my notice. The symptoms however were considerably moderated in their violence, and at length assumed the form of a mild remittent. With the intention of exciting a more healthy action of the liver, I gave her sub. muriated mercury in alternate doses. In the mean time I had learnt from her mother that she had never menstruated ; that for a long time previous to her last attack, she had been subject to ill turns once in three or four weeks ; that she was at such times subject in a greater or less degree to the usual distress attendant on painful menstruation. Her countenance was of the chlorotic kind. Bark and other tonics were given her to a considerable extent, without any evident effect. In three or four weeks from the time I first saw her she was attacked much as at first, but complained of more distress. The stomach, and indeed all the viscera seemed to suffer alternately, but the contents of the pelvis suffered most. At this late period I learnt that she had a tumified abdomen, that it was most prominent *at first* on *one side*, but was now equally diffused. I at first suspected an ascites, but on discovering no evident fluctuation, concluded it might be a dropsy of the ovaria. There were many symptoms however, that I could with difficulty account for on that supposition, and the idea of an *imperforate vagina* suggested itself. I explained myself to the mother, and urged the necessity of an examination. The patient was unwilling, and the mother would not urge it. I called for counsel. They ad-