TREATMENT OF THE CONSTIPATION IN LEAD COLIC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The accompanying case you may, perhaps, consider to be likely to assist my professional brethren in the treatment of that most obstinate complaint, “colica pictorum.” I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

FREDERICK MOSGROVE.

1, Finsbury-terrace, City-road,
July 15, 1840.

July 4. I was requested to visit J. W., æt. 32, a painter, whom I found labouring under a most severe attack of colica pictorum, the spasm so intense as to render him at times perfectly insensible, and in a state closely bordering on epilepsy. I learnt that he had felt slight pain in the bowels during the preceding day, for which he had taken two doses of Epsom salts, but without producing any action of the bowels. I prescribed calomel with large doses of the extract of hyoscyamus, and a purgative mixture to be repeated every second hour. In the evening the spasms were somewhat less intense, but the bowels not having been relieved, I repeated the calomel with opium, and ordered castor oil and turpentine enemata to be given at intervals during the night.

June 5, 8 A.M. The spasms were slightly relieved during the night, but are now increasing in intensity; two enemata have been retained without occasioning any evacuation of the bowels. Having frequently found the shock occasioned by a sudden application of cold water very beneficial in epilepsy, I determined on having recourse to it in this case, more especially as the epileptic symptoms were evidently returning. I directed that my patient should be seated in a large tub, and that a jugful of cold water should be dashed three or four times against his abdomen; being in much haste I was unable to remain to see the remedy employed, but on visiting him in the afternoon, I was informed that the pain had been so much relieved by the application of the water, that he was immediately enabled to sleep for a short time. About an hour afterwards the spasms threatened to return, when he requested his wife to have recourse again to the cold water, which instantaneously checked the spasm.

Thinking, from his wife's reluctance to the employment of the remedy, that she might not have applied it as effectively as I desired, I had him placed in a tub, and repeatedly dashed a large jugful of cold water, with much force, and as rapidly as possible, against his abdomen; this caused a slight evacuation of the bowels within ten minutes;

I then gave directions that if the bowels were not more freely relieved in an hour, a large ewer full of cold water should be gradually poured from a slight elevation on his abdomen. On visiting him three hours afterwards I found this had been done, and that the bowels had been freely evacuated five times; the spasm had entirely ceased; he was enabled to visit me the following morning, and has not, since the last application of the water, had the slightest return of spasm. I should mention that at first he expressed a strong disinclination to the employment of the remedy, but having found himself so instantaneously relieved, expressed much anxiety that it should be repeated.

RESTORATION AFTER DROWNING, BY VOLTAIC ELECTRICITY

ACTING ON THE PHRENIC AND EIGHTH PAIR.

THE following particulars are published by Dr. FERGUSON, Surgeon to the Westmeath Infirmary, in the “Dublin Medical Press” of July 1st:—

On Thursday evening, the 18th instant, I was requested to see James Rock, who had just been taken out of the canal, and was supposed to be dead. I was with him in four or five minutes. I had him forthwith removed to the County Infirmary, about 900 yards distant. Several persons said that he was six or seven minutes under the water, and that he had been intoxicated. Finding the abdomen very much distended, I immediately introduced the stomach-pump, and discharged by it upwards of a gallon of water, strongly impregnated with spirits. All the ordinary means of restoring animation failing, I tried a plan which I have long considered likely to bring about the action of the heart and lungs, by immediately acting on the diaphragm, and accordingly was prepared with the necessary apparatus. I made an incision below the seventh rib—cut down on that important muscle—laid it bare, and applied the conductors of a galvanic battery, consisting of fifty pairs of plates, to it. The effect was instantaneous, and surprised all the persons present. The muscles of the chest and abdomen became spasmodically engaged; after a few moments, I could see this spasmodic action gradually disappear, and the regular action of the chest come on, which soon increased till breathing became quite apparent, as also the circulation; and blood, now for the first time, issued from the wound I had made in the chest.

He has continued to go on well, under the use of the lancet, and the antiphlogistic treatment; and I have no doubt of discharging him, cured, very shortly.

This case will also go to prove, in my opinion, that it is not necessary to transmit