UNSUCCESSFUL TRIAL OF

DR. STEVENS' SALINE TREATMENT

IN MALIGNANT CHOLERA.

To the Secretary of the CENTRAL BOARD
OF HEALTH.

Rochester, July 21, 1832.

SIR,—Being strongly impressed with the hope that the chemical pathology of the blood, as shown in Dr. O'Shaughnessy's able analysis, would lead to a more rational and certain mode of treatment in this disease than any hitherto laid down; and, at that time being strongly excited by the simple mode of treatment recommended by Dr. Stevens (on this principle), and lauded by him with such praise and success in his practice in the Coldbath-Fields Prison, was determined to give this remedy a fair and unbiassed trial on the first opportunity that should occur.

An opportunity soon presented itself, by my having charge of an hospital ship attached to the convict establishment at this port, where the cholera had assumed a very malignant character.

Three cases were selected for trial, of the admissions during one day.

Case 1.—The medicine was given every hour, as recommended by Dr. Stevens, together with dry heat, frictions, mustard poultices, and injections of hot salt and water; but notwithstanding the most unremitting attention of myself and assistants to the faithful exhibition of this remedy, he died in about twenty hours after admission, or after he began to use the medicine.

Case 2.—Used the same remedy as in Case 1, immediately upon admission; died forty-eight hours after he commenced to take the medicine. Neither of these cases showed the least symptoms towards reaction during the whole period under treatment.

Case 3.—Was likewise put under the same mode of treatment as the two preceding cases, but observing them sink so rapidly under the saline treatment, and believing, from much experience in this disease, both in India and in England, that I had superior remedial powers at command, the saline treatment was accordingly laid aside. A mustard emetic was immediately given; bleeding by leeches from the region of the heart and præcordia; ten-grain doses of calomel, five of capsicum, given every hour; the mustard sinapisms, dry heat, and a diffusive stimuli, given as occasion pointed out, with a table-spoonful of cold water, as the craving for drink was excessive. The salt-water enema was continued, with an addition of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the ol. terebinthinæ

to each; by which treatment reaction was soon established, and he is now at duty.

From my own practice and experience, and in that of some of my friends, of the saline treatment, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that it is a remedy, *per se*, totally inert in the collapsed stage of cholera.

I can, however, state, that the hot saline enemata, when combined with the ol. terebinthinæ and the mustard poultices, as recommended by Dr. Stevens, are most valuable remedies in the stage of collapse from cholera. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours obediently, &c.,

JOHN ANDERSON, M.D.,
Surgeon, R.N.

Extract from another letter from Dr. Anderson, same date :—

During the last week I have had twelve boys in a complete state of collapse; they have all been treated under the plan pointed out, and I am happy to say that reaction has been established in all of them, with only one exception; and even this case, I trust, will still do well. It is rather singular, but true, that I have as yet lost no case where reaction has been once fairly established.

(Signed) JOHN ANDERSON.

BARBADOES NAPHTHA IN CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I be permitted through your talented publication to offer to the consideration of the medical profession, the probable advantages of employing Barbadoes Naphtha as a preventive against cholera, on the grounds of its being a compound simply of two elements, *hydrogen* and *carbon*, and containing a greater portion of *pure carbon* in a fluid state than any other known natural substance, the proportion of carbon being 85 per cent, whilst the greatest proportion of carbon in each of the subjoined active medicinal products, obtained from the most powerful vegetable tribes, is, “in brucine only 75 per cent, morphine 71, narcotine 68, emetine 64, and quinine 74.” Thus demonstrating that the great proportion of carbon, in a soluble form, is the *principle* which accounts for the superiority of this highly curious product, over all other medicinal preparations, in particular cases, and its possessing the peculiar property of counteracting all morbid decompositions.

By a chemical analysis we are instructed, that a *drachm* of this natural product contains 52 grains of carbon, and which can be progressively increased to 1000 grains in