guage that may very well suit the "pomp of ceremony," but cannot, by any means, furnish the media of free communication.

In concluding this hasty and imperfect sketch of our northern University, I may be allowed just to glance at the numerous and important advantages which abound, exclusively of the University arrangements. The fact is, that in every department of medicine and surgery, there are to be found a whole host of lecturers and teachers; amongst these are the names of Knox, Syme, Thompson, Ballingall, Liston, and others, of deserved and great reputation; so that either in or out of the University, there is abundance of means for conferring all that is necessary towards the completest medical and surgical education. In the city of Edinburgh, there certainly exists a constellation of professional genius and talent that has no parallel, and sufficient, I am sure, to dazzle and confound the most omni-captious snarler, to say nothing of the auxiliary advantages to be derived from the Royal Medical, and other Societies. Hoping that these remarks may induce some more competent person to take up this important subject, I remain your constant reader, and not unfrequent admirer,

BETA.

Bradford, York, March 24, 1830.

OBSERVATIONS ON

PULMONARY CONSUMPTION,

And the Uses of the Peruvian Bark in Ulceration of the Lungs.

By Dr. J. HANCOCK.

ULCERATION, or sores in the lungs, are seldom attended with much pain; and, therefore, the patient is scarcely sensible of his danger. It does not, like most other diseases, depress the mental faculties, but often seems to sharpen them; or, at least, to excite the sensibility of the patient; only serving to render him more susceptible to other impressions, regardless of the disease he is labouring under, which is preying upon his vitals.

We often hear patients exclaim, "I have no pain, it is only cough which annoys me—give me something to relieve that, and I shall be well enough." Mistaking the cause for the effect, they consider the cough to be the disease, whereas it is only the effect, or rather, the natural effort to throw off the phlegm, and relieve the lungs from their burden of humours; and it is unknown how much the efforts of nature, in this case, can

be facilitated by due attention from the patient. It is a subject, indeed, which admits of new and important deductions.

We find that people who have long been subject to cough, especially the aged, and more sagacious, acquire a habit of coughing in a manner very different from that of children, and persons of lower mental powers. The cough being, in some measure, under the control of the will, they insensibly gain a habit of restraining this orgasm for a time, so as to render the paroxysms less frequent, and, in proportion, more effectual in dislodging the mucus, and raising it from the lungs: by a longer interval, more power is acquired, and a more effectual effort is produced for expelling the offending mucus. Whereas, we find the cough of children, and persons of lesser judgment, to be more continuous, hacking, and ineffectual, and possessing a less expulsive power: the same is particularly observable amongst some of the Indian tribes of South America, in whom I have sometimes compared it to a kind of barking, *latratus caninum*—running on incessantly, and harrassing the patient to little effect; when, if he had sense to restrain it till urged with redoubled force, and then making a full inspiration, a single expulsive effort would clear the lungs, and bring off the load of phlegm which obstructs and irritates them. By such exertions, and occasionally a full and deep inspiration, we not only dilate and unload the air-cells of the lungs, but also expand and give freedom to the chest, and energy to the intercostals, the diaphragm, and thoracic viscera, tending, in no small measure, to promote a healthy action in the pulmonary viscera. I can affirm, that by due attention to this matter, great advantages may thus be gained by persons afflicted with habitual cough, rendering them less obnoxious to the invasion of consumptive complaints. We may, likewise, strengthen the muscles by other exercises; as by often suspending the weight of the body by the hands, pulling at a rope, lifting moderate weights, &c.; the beneficial results of such pectoral gymnastics, if so we may designate exercises of this kind, are very evident, in the increased strength and development of the muscles of the chest and arms in sailors; and it is worthy of remark that, comparatively, they seldom become subjects of pulmonary disorders. I do not recollect having seen, during a residence of twenty-five years in South America, a single instance of such complaint in a sailor.

The difficulty of healing ulcers in the lungs need not be insisted on; it is well known to be amongst the greatest opprobria of the art of medicine; hence the unrestrained and desolating strides of pulmonary disorders, which, it appears, on reports from the bills of mortality, destroy not less than

two-fifths of the inhabitants of the British Isles!

I had been informed, some years ago, that persons employed in the great bark magazines of Guayaquil, and Peru, had many times been known to recover from pulmonary consumptions. The respectability of the authority was such as left no room to doubt the correctness of the statement, as it was from persons who had resided in those parts.

These magazines contain hundreds of tons of the genuine Peruvian bark, and a very powerful odour of that salutary drug is exhaled in them; the work carried on for keeping it dry, causing large quantities of the bark to be floating in the air in a state of minute division. To those acquainted with the great efficacy of the bark, externally applied, in healing indolent and ill-conditioned ulcers, it will not be difficult, perhaps, to conceive the *modus operandi*, or the effects to be reasonably expected from its direct application to ulcers in the lungs.*

From the consideration, as well as from the well-known veracity of my informant, it appears to me, as I presume it will to every unprejudiced mind, that these results are referable to the most rational principles of pathology, and such as should warrant a trial of the same remedy in this country, and with a steady perseverance, till its merits or demerits be duly ascertained, as it may open a door of hope in cases where, at present, there is nothing but despair. It can hardly be doubted, on reasonable grounds, that the same remedy may be attended by similar results, in consumption here, as at the places above-mentioned; possibly, therefore, the healing of pulmonary ulcers might be promoted by breathing the effluvia of bark in a small room during the process of pulverization in a large mortar, sifting the powder, &c., as this would afford a similar application of the remedy. The fact of recoveries, from consumption, by the means just mentioned, I was told, was so generally known, that frequent applications were made by consumptive persons, for employment in those situations, where the bark is thrown and turned for drying, this process being necessary in that humid climate, to prevent its spoiling, or contracting moisture.

We find an important paper by Dr. Black-

* The fresh powdered bark of the cinchona lancifolia, is one of the most useful applications for the healing of ulcers in general, especially those depending on a vitiated secretion of humours, or on flaccidity and want of tone in the vessels and fibres of the part; and its effects are, of course, greatly enhanced by taking the bark internally at the same time.

more, in the last number of the Edin. Med. and Surg. Journal, p. 6, that pulmonary disorders destroy nearly one-third of the inhabitants of great towns. At Truro, it is stated by Mr. Phillips, to be 75 or 80 in 100! But there must be some mistake in this statement, I presume.

It is such topographic and statistical reports as those of Dr. Blackmore, together with relations of successful cases, which must contribute more than any other means to an improved method in the treatment of pulmonary phthisis.

An idea most unfortunately prevails, that every case of genuine pulmonary consumption, in its ulcerative stage, is absolutely incurable, and by the propagation of this absurd dogma—as false as it is destructive—practitioners are discouraged from making any great effort to save the patient, and must prescribe somewhat to amuse or satisfy the anxiety of the sufferer, as, perhaps, digitalis, Griffiths' antihectic mixture, asses milk, &c. Dr. Young thinks that one in a hundred cases may be cured. A foreign writer on consumption, M. Bayle, who is regarded amongst the highest authorities, asserts that no real, established case of pulmonary consumption is curable.*

We have little cause to expect any amendment of the practice, whilst governed by such a diversity of vacillating opinions, and promoted by such partial and feeble efforts. One regards the disease as a local affection, another considers it as constitutional: one prescribes this, another that remedy, according to the *indication* of symptoms, without pursuing any steady plan, or method, with vigour; or calling in the *united* aid of such potent remedies as are calculated to operate a decided change in the patient's habit of body;—for here lies the whole secret for the cure of consumption, and not in the hunting up of particular symptoms as a guide for the treatment.

Nor can more be said of the later discoveries by the stethoscope: it has somewhat improved our means of judging of the state

* This author informs us he has dissected 900 patients who died of consumption: he distinguishes several kinds, and prescribes particular methods for each; but with all his parade of *science*, formal distinctions, and indications, it does not appear that he has at all advanced the means of cure, although, according to his translator, Dr. Barrow, his admirers had boasted that more had been done by him in this field, than had been effected in all other countries during a period of 2000 years. However little may have been done by others, I cannot perceive that any really useful result whatever, or any prospect of it, has arisen from the laboured and bulky work of this writer.

of the lungs, and forming a prognosis of the event; yet we do not find the treatment any thing more successful than before, in pulmonary complaints; but it has given rise to a vast deal of speculation under the pompous title of *pathological science*. The use of this simple instrument as a test, is certainly not to be condemned; as it may, hereafter, lead to some improvements in practice; I only contend that it deserves not to be considered as an instrument of such vast importance.

We should consider what remedies, or, what are the means most successfully employed for the healing of ulcers in general. I have found the free use of sarsaparilla, when genuine, to be one of the most effectual auxiliaries, (and that of the Rio Negro especially so,) other remedies being also taken advantage of; for it is only by altering, or effecting an important change in, the habit of body, *along with* the use of topical remedies, that we can hope to produce a favourable change in cases of internal ulceration.

I beg leave here to refer the reader, for some further particulars on this subject, to a paper on the Rio Negro Sarsa, published in the Med. Bot. Trans. last year.

Other valuable remedies in pulmonary complaints, are the haiowa, the siruba, (*ocotea cymbarum* [dubia] Humbt.?) and a similar exudation, the balsamara, or green balsam, nearly as fluid, volatile, and camphoraceous, when recent, and probably from a kindred species; this is brought from the Sierra de Pacaraimo, some days' journey to the southward of the Orinoque; and, fourthly, the radix waiacouri, or wank root, a plant, it seems, altogether unknown to the botanists, but apparently of the natural family of apocynæ, although, in some respects, allied to the bignoneæ, it grows on the Rio Barime, near its source, and doubtless in various parts of Guiana. The two latter are justly regarded by the natives as invaluable pectorals, bechic and antihæctic remedies, especially, combined—a tincture being formed of the root, and united with honey or syrup; they are often carried in their *patacas*, for such purposes, on journeys. The mixture also of the green balsam with corokai, forms a precious remedy, applicable to many purposes, their powers being augmented by the union. I have samples of most of these articles. I have employed these balsamic substances extensively, and never found them produce those unpleasant or dangerous effects, so much dreaded or denounced in the modern practice of physic.

If any of them are to be considered hurtful, it is those chiefly containing benzoic acid, the presence of which modern chemistry has made necessary for characterizing a balsam, although, as I conceive, this ad-

ventitious principle is the only one which, when abundant, renders these substances *un-balsamic*, or unfit for internal use as balsamics; that is to say, as deterring, healing, or soothing remedies.

These medicines exert a palpable and specific action on the lungs;* duly combined, two or three doses will, in general, be found sufficient to cure a recent cough, and they even afford a powerful auxiliary in cases more advanced, and threatening consumption. When the disorder proves obstinate, they should be accompanied by a light alterative course of mercury, as a grain of the black oxide every night, with as much opium and ipecacuanha; together with the daily use of sarsa. infused, or gently boiled in a covered vessel, with liquorice root, and the guaiacum bark—the gum and wood of this tree being too acrid and heating for such disorders. The vapour-bath and blisters are also important, using, during the course, a spare diet, chiefly of milk and vegetables, little animal food, and warm clothing.

I need not apologise, I presume, for dwelling on this topic, in a climate where such numbers are destroyed by pulmonary affections, and in which the remedies of our pharmacopœias prove so ineffectual.

It is rather singular, and difficult to account for, that pulmonary consumption, although a disease rarely occurring on the *sea coast* of Guiana, is frequently met with in the interior, both amongst the Spaniards and Indians, and that too, where the mean temperature is nearly the same as that of the coast. I believe the reverse obtains here, or that the sea-coast is the most productive of the disease in Britain.

I shall here briefly relate a case which

* I know that pathologists have been much prone to deny the specific action of remedies, or the aptitude they possess of exerting their influence on particular parts of the body, in preference to others. I presume, however, that little need be said in the present state of our knowledge, to prove that such is the case, both with remedies and poisons, whether from the effect of absorption, sympathy, or nervous communication. On this head, Dr. Christison has recently, by direct experiment, placed the matter beyond doubt. Speaking on poisons, he remarks that "some act on the *heart* almost solely, others on the *lungs*, brain, or spinal cord; others are multifarious in their action; and most poisons which have an indirect action, exert it on one or more of the important organs only, and not on the whole system." See *Ed. Med. and Surg. Jour.* Jan. 1830, p. 207. If this be true in respect to poisons, it is equally so of remedies; for the more active agents, are either poisons or remedies, according to the dose.

seems to me deserving of notice. I was told by Dr. Diego Guzman, who resided at Angostura, that, in the year 1810, being either at La Guaira or Caraccas, he was in the last stage of consumption, and only able to walk across the room, coughing and spitting dark-coloured matter incessantly; that, by the advice of his friend, he was carried on board a vessel bound to Spain; that the accommodations were miserable; every berth being pre-occupied, he could only get a place in the hold, where a most foetid and suffocating odour of bilge water almost deprived him of breath. Something occurred to detain the vessel for ten or twelve days in the harbour, and during that time (remaining on board) he found a great change in his disorder had already taken place; he coughed much less, felt less fatigue, slept better, and now felt somewhat of refreshment from sleep. The vessel sailed, and in three or four weeks, or before they reached the coast of Europe, he felt himself quite well, with a good appetite, free from cough, and all complaint.* There were some fermenting coffee, plantains, or other vegetable matter, and water in the hold, which could not be got at, and the stench continued all the voyage; owing to the force of habit, he felt no annoyance or inconvenience from it after a few days. The scent he represented to be similar to that arising from the combustion of gunpowder, besides a fetor he knew not how to describe; it was, doubtless, a mixture of carburetted and sulphuretted hydrogen with the atmospheric air. Guzman was a man of proved veracity, tall, of slender make, had a narrow chest and slender neck, and therefore bore in his person, we may say, the physical as well as moral signs of truth in this report, in which, indeed, he could have no inducement to deceive; and from all he said respecting the appearance of the nails, hollowness at the root of the thumb, his universal emaciation, hectic cough and expectoration, it appeared to me certain it had been truly as he stated, a confirmed and far-advanced case of pulmonary consumption; said he had left off medicines, thinking nothing but death would relieve him, and he wished to die in his own country. With Guzman, the lung seemed the devoted part to the last; he was shot through the lung, in one of the night-attacks of the patriots, on the town of Angostura, in 1817.

I am aware of the trials made with the gases and pneumatic medicines, by Dr. Beddoes, and other celebrated physicians, but feel persuaded that these agents have

* I have somewhere read of a similar case, in which the mephitic air of the ship's hold produced a recovery; this will, perhaps, be recollected by some of the numerous readers of THE LANCET.

never been duly tried on rational principles; that instead of keeping the patient continuously immersed in the gas, or mephitic air, they have been made to breathe it only for a few hours per diem, and this, with the alternate admission of fresh air, could only be expected to render the pulmonary organs still more irritable. Ulcers in all parts of the body, excepting the lungs, usually heal spontaneously. If, as no one doubts, the air of respiration be the chief cause which keeps up the irritation, it is then natural to expect that the most direct remedial means must depend on a proper modification of the air, and the particles inhaled.

The combination above alluded to (the radix waiacouri, and green balsam), it is certain do exert a peculiar soothing influence on the thoracic viscera, not less useful in acute than in chronic cases; they abate irritation and the inflammatory action—and, together with the vapour-bath, frictions, and a light course of mercury, are of vast importance, in the treatment of those inflammations especially, which invade a weakened, gouty, or sero-plethoric habit, as in such habits depletion is almost sure to induce dropsy,* and they are, indeed, amongst the most successful remedies, when the disorder (hydrothorax) has arisen from such source. I have known it succeed in cases so far advanced, that the patient was unable to repose or to respire in a recumbent posture. I must not omit to remark, by the way, that it has proved the most effectual remedy in cases of *translation of gout* upon the internal or vital parts—as also an excellent nervine and anti-rheumatic remedy, in both acute and chronic cases.

Having thrown out these hints, I shall here take leave of the important subject of phthisis pulmonalis, with the hope that the learned and ingenious will, ere long, rouse themselves, to oppose the gigantic strides of this desolating malady.

* The habit of body here alluded to, is precisely that of a great personage, now actually suffering, perhaps, under the disorder above mentioned. It has been stated, that he had been copiously and repeatedly bled, but this is, doubtless, incorrect.

GUY'S HOSPITAL.

THERE is a case of aneurism of the innominata at present in this institution; and Mr. Key, under whose care the patient has been placed, is very anxious to learn "whether Professor Mott is a person whose statements may be relied on?"