ON THE
OPERATION FOR VARIX,
 ON THE SYSTEM PROPOSED BY M. LAUGIER.
By CHARLES CLAY, Esq., Surgeon.

SOON after reading the remarks of M. Laugier, in *THE LANCET* of the 18th July, a case fell under my care that presented a favourable opportunity for giving the operation proposed a trial, and an account of which may be of use to the public.

Betty Whitehead, ætat 27, applied at the dispensary for relief; she was unable to follow any employment, in consequence of large varicose veins occupying the whole of the inner surface of the left leg from the knee to the foot; the circumference of the affected leg was nearly double the other. Liniments and bandages were of little use, and as the leg daily became worse, she submitted to the operation on the 25th July.

Assisted by my colleague, Dr. N. Strange, I laid the vein bare in two places, about six inches apart, each opening of the integuments being a little short of an inch, and the vein being exposed to the extent of half an inch. Great care was required in the first incisions lest the vein, which is generally very superficial, should be injured. A piece of lint one inch and a half broad and four inches long, in which a cut of half an inch was made with a knife

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 was then prepared;

and after waiting a few minutes for the bleeding to subside (which is very trifling, but yet sufficient to prevent the due operation of the caustic paste), I placed the lint crossway over the wound, so that the exposed vessel and the fissure in the lint approximated to each other. A piece of stiff Vienna paste was then formed in the shape of a wedge, of about half an inch square, the pointed edge of which was pressed through the cut in the lint down upon the diseased vessel steadily and rather forcibly, and the loose ends of the lint were turned over the back of the wedge with a strap of adhesive plaster to bind down the whole. The same plan being employed to both incisions, she was instructed to keep the leg quiet. The principal pain was over in half an hour, and that was of but little moment.

In three days a large slough was formed, and at this time the leg was reduced to its natural size, the varicose appearance had vanished, and an ulcerous sore on the internal malleolus was healing rapidly, which had before resisted every application. Mild poultices were applied to the sloughs, which fell out in about fourteen days. The sores are now nearly healed, and the woman has resumed her employment.

This case differs from the plan pursued by M. Laugier, inasmuch as the bleeding from the first incisions was of so trifling a nature, that no nitrate of silver was used to check it; and this, which is spoken of by Laugier as being the most painful part of the operation, is done away with by waiting a very few minutes. Again, by making the Vienna paste very stiff, it is easily formed into a wedge; and, by pressing it in that state through the lint, it adapts itself nicely to the diseased vessel, while the lint covers the lips of the wound, and the wrapping of the ends over the wedge leaves no caustic to clear away. The paste I use consists of equal parts of dry powdered lime and the caustic potass, with only just sufficient moisture to make them into a stiff paste. I expect to give the result of two more cases shortly. In the mean time I venture to say, that the plan is worthy of trial, and have little doubt but that it will give general satisfaction.

101, Piccadilly, Manchester,
 August 19, 1840.

ON THE PRESENCE OF
IODATE OF POTASH
 IN
 COMMERCIAL IODIDE OF POTASSIUM,
 AND THE MODE OF DETECTING IT.
By MAURICE SCANLAN, Esq., Wolverhampton.

MR. WILLIAM BAILEY, of this town, who, amongst other chemical products, has lately become a maker of iodide of potassium on the great scale, has, within a few days, directed my attention to the examination of a specimen of this salt, made by a house of deservedly high repute, as manufacturing chemists, near London; and whose name is generally looked upon, in the trade, as giving the stamp of purity to any chemical to which it may be prefixed.

It appears that hydriodic acid is sometimes exhibited as a therapeutic agent, and the method resorted to for its extemporaneous preparation is that recommended by Dr. Andrew Buchanan, of Glasgow. It consists in mixing together, in proper proportion, iodide of potassium and tartaric acid, both in solution.

Now, the quantity of free iodine liberated from this salt, which I have under examination, when treated with tartaric acid, in the way just mentioned, has led some dispensing chemists to suppose that it contains more iodine than other specimens of iodide of potassium, which, when treated in a similar way, afford a solution that is colourless, or, at most, of a very pale yellow colour; and hence, as I am informed, some actually look upon tartaric acid as a test of the value of commercial iodide of potassium, assuming the salt of which we are

now speaking as a standard of comparison. How far it may be depended upon as a test will appear from what follows.

If tartaric acid in solution be added to a solution of pure iodide of potassium, the commixed solutions are at first colourless, but quickly become slightly yellow, owing to the action of atmospheric oxygen on the hydriodic acid which is thus generated.

On making this experiment with the salt in question, I found, to my great astonishment, that free iodine, in quantity, was instantly developed. I was at first at a loss to account for so great a difference in the behaviour of this salt to that which I had prepared myself, and knew to be pure iodide of potassium; but, from the appearance of the crystals of this salt, and from the circumstance of its not being soluble in water to the extent that it should be, I suspected the existence of iodate of potash in it, and I have since convinced myself of the fact of its presence.

I find, if we add tartaric acid solution to a solution of iodate of potash, no change of colour takes place, but that bitartrate of potash is deposited in abundance, and, as a matter of course, iodic acid set at liberty, this solution instantly decomposes iodide of potassium in solution, giving rise to free iodine in great abundance; or, if we add a drop of solution of tartaric acid to a solution of pure iodide of potassium, to which even a minute quantity of iodate of potash has been added, free iodine is instantly developed.

Tartaric acid appears, then, from the experiments I have made, to be a very delicate test of the presence of iodate of potash in iodide of potassium, and will be found a very ready and useful one for this purpose in the hands of the dispensing chemist, showing him that any specimen of this salt in which free iodine is thus developed, is actually of less value than one in which no trace of iodine appears on the instant of its application; inasmuch as iodide of potassium, in a given weight, includes more iodine than iodate of potash does; as is seen at once by the atomic composition of these two salts.

It is well known to every chemist, that one of the methods very commonly resorted to for the production of iodide of potassium is that of acting upon iodine with potash water. In this way we form iodate of potash at the same time; six atoms of potash and six atoms of iodine giving birth to five atoms of iodide of potassium, and one atom of iodate of potash; which latter, if suffered to remain mixed with the iodide, would increase the produce of the manufactured salt nearly five per cent., at the expense of its purity and crystalline beauty.

CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—As it is probable that some cases of cholera may visit us again this season, I send you one that occurred in my practice last week; not from anything novel in the case, or its treatment, but because the latter was so successful that I think it worthy of being adopted by those who have not already had recourse to it under similar circumstances. I shall not contend whether the case was one of English or Asiatic cholera, but leave your readers to draw their own conclusions on that point.

I was sent for early last Thursday morning to see a stout elderly woman, who had been seized with diarrhoea on the previous day, without any assignable cause. I found her cold, pale, and pulseless, with constant vomiting and purging, attended with violent cramps in the legs. There had been an incessant drain from the bowels, of a colourless fluid, which had passed involuntarily during the night, and had saturated the bed. There was no pain in the bowels, nor any other existing particular symptom, save a great prostration of strength. A large mustard plaster (made with boiling vinegar) was instantly applied from the sternum to the umbilicus; and a grain and a half of calomel was ordered to be given every hour in a powder, and ten grains of carbonate of potash, dissolved in cinnamon water, immediately after each dose.

I found on my next visit, at the expiration of three hours, that the plaster had been removed after three quarters of an hour, having given great pain during the last quarter. Complete reaction had taken place, and the vomiting was arrested. In the evening the symptoms were so much alleviated, that the calomel and potash were given through the night every two hours. On the following morning, after taking ten doses of calomel, the motions having become dark, foetid, and bilious, it was discontinued, and a mixture, with rhubarb, magnesia, and cordial confection, was substituted. On the following day this was succeeded by an infusion of cascarrilla, with carbonate of potash. The patient is now convalescent. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM MOSS.

Windsor, August 24, 1840.

* * * The common cholera of this country has latterly been very prevalent; so has the half-ripe fruit.

THEORY.—To form a theory is to look from on high, and seize upon certain relations, just as from the highest tower of a town we are enabled to embrace at one view its streets and buildings, and comprehend the relative position of its principal features and suburbs.