

I was induced to place the subject before your readers, from the following accidental occurrence:—

Two years ago I was requested to visit a poor Irish woman, belonging to a charity, who had been confined with her sixth child about a fortnight. The midwife who had attended her stated that "she had been purged for several days; that she had a bearing-down of the womb, was very weak," &c.

I found on my visit the correctness of the midwife's statement, and ordered for the patient, compound chalk mixture, with tincture of opium, for the diarrhoea; decoction of oak-bark, with alum, as an injection per vaginam. Both mixture and injection were put into wine bottles sent for the purpose, and labels, with directions, tied to the necks. As the poor woman lived some distance from my residence, I requested the midwife to send me word how she progressed.

Being near the patient's abode three days after my first visit, I called to see her, and found her wonderfully improved in appearance and reality. I could not fancy she was the same woman I had beheld only three days before, pale, languid, desponding; her cheeks had become of rosy hue, her eyes were sparkling, her voice firm and cheerful. My first impression was, that she was under the influence of some stimulant, but I found that she had taken neither porter, spirits, nor wine, since her confinement. She attributed her improvement to the "beautiful medicine" I had sent her.

"Is the bearing-down feeling relieved?" I enquired. "Yes, your honour," was her reply. "You had better continue the injection a little longer." "Oh, it only lasted one day," said the nurse, and handed me the bottle. I found that the chalk mixture had supplied the place of the injection, and that the decoction of oak bark had been taken by mistake. A child, on the day the medicine was sent, had removed the labels; one was lost, the other tied to the wrong bottle. Thus had the patient taken at the rate of an ounce and a half of the decoction of oak-bark, with about five grains of alum every four hours, till all was consumed—twenty-four ounces. I found the diarrhoea had soon ceased, but that the medicine was continued "because it gave strength."

Is this proposed remedy worthy of a trial? It is one that may be used "with safety." With this view I beg to submit it to your readers, without any further comment for the present.

Berners-street, 1849.

AN ACCOUNT OF A

NEW MODE OF REDUCING STRANGULATED HERNIA.

By BENJAMIN T. HODGE, Esq., Surgeon, Sidmouth.

A FEW days since I was sent for to attend a man living some miles distant; but, being absent from home, and having numerous professional engagements, I did not arrive at my patient's house until several hours had elapsed. The case was one of strangulated oblique inguinal hernia, the rupture being of several years' standing, though strangulation of the intestine had never before taken place, as the patient was in the habit of reducing it himself with no great difficulty. On this occasion, however, he was not so successful; and the usual alarming symptoms—vomiting, constipation, and tenderness of the part—having presented themselves, he lost no time, during the interval before my arrival, in trying every means which occurred to him as most likely to facilitate his object. The external application of cold water, the warm bath, and the taxis, under every variety of position, as far as he himself could employ it, were all in vain. At last the pain became so acute, that he lay on the floor in a corner of the room, and raised his back against the wall, till at length he fairly stood on his head. After remaining in this position for a minute or two, the tumour receded without manipulation, and the hernia was reduced spontaneously. This occurred only a few minutes before my arrival. Relief had been instantaneous, and a dose of castor oil rendered further treatment unnecessary.

Sidmouth, Dec. 3, 1849.

ON CERTAIN IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE CHEMISTRY AND PATHOLOGY OF THE URINE.

By ARTHUR HILL HASSALL, M.B.

On the Occurrence of Crystallized Urea.—The fact of the occurrence of crystallized urea in the urine is, I believe, not generally known; it is, however, very frequently met with in that fluid in a solid condition, the crystals presenting a great variety of shapes and appearances, but all of them reducible

to one primary rhomboidal form. Of the more remarkable of these modifications I have had careful drawings prepared.

With the fact of the occurrence of free urea in a crystallized state I became acquainted nearly four years ago, but being at that time much engaged, I did not then follow up the matter as its importance deserved. I had, however, several drawings prepared, which are still in my possession, and which Dr. Letheby, to whom they were shown, pronounced to be representations of crystallized urea.

On Free Oxalic Acid in the Urine.—I have several times noticed the presence of free oxalic acid in the urine, and have figures showing different modifications of the crystals of that substance.

On an Undescribed Crystalline Salt.—I have been for more than four years familiar with the presence in the urine of a dumb-bell formation, entirely distinct from the well-known salt of lime, of a somewhat similar shape. Of this undescribed compound I had a drawing prepared by Mr. Miller, the artist, at the time of its first being observed, and which was shown, with other sketches, to Dr. Letheby.

From the repeated observation of this salt in the urine my attention has been more particularly called to it, and I have ascertained it to be an oxalate of soda, with a small quantity of urea in a state of combination.

The crystals of this salt vary much in form and condition, and I have several figures representing some of these modifications.

The importance of these facts in a pathological point of view is not inconsiderable.

It will be readily perceived that the above are merely announcements of facts, which need for their full elucidation many details and numerous figures; these, however, are reserved for a future occasion.

Notting-hill, Dec. 4, 1849.

(To be continued.)

ON THE TREATMENT OF POMPHOLYX BY LUNAR CAUSTIC.

By EDWIN C. COTTINGHAM, Esq., M.R.C.S. & L.A.C., Wangford, Suffolk.

SHOULD the accompanying account of an obstinate case of pompholyx cured by the application of lunar caustic be deemed worthy of insertion in THE LANCET, I should be glad to see it recorded in the pages of that journal.

Mrs. G—, forty-two years of age, had been suffering under a protracted case of pompholyx for several weeks, which had not yielded to the various applications resorted to. When I first saw this case, the whole of the anterior surface of the right leg was studded with bullæ, at irregular intervals, accompanied with great irritation and tenderness of the skin. After detaching the cuticle with a pair of scissors, I applied the lunar caustic freely to the denuded surfaces, at the same time surrounding each bulla by a circle of caustic a line in breadth. The pain caused by the application having subsided, this patient expressed herself as quite free from the intense itching before experienced; and up to the present time no fresh bullæ have appeared.

December, 1849.

ON THE USE OF GALLIC ACID IN THE TREATMENT OF ALBUMINURIA.

By JOHN LYELL, Esq., Surgeon, Newburgh, Fife.

I WAS much pleased in perusing Mr. Sampson's paper in last week's LANCET, "On the Use of Gallic Acid in Albuminous Urine," as it is a practice corroborative of the beneficial agency I have experienced from the same medicine for several years past.

The same process of reasoning which has led Mr. Sampson, knowing the effects of gallic acid in hæmaturia, to employ it in albuminuria, induced me, upwards of three years ago, to give it a trial in these latter cases, and, bating some exceptions, with the happiest effects.

Passing over the first case, in which I was my own patient, and speedily improved under its use, I shall give a brief detail of the second instance in which it was used by me, as a fair specimen of the cases in which gallic acid may be expected to do good—it resembles Mr. Sampson's fourth case.

Mrs. A—, a married elderly lady, consulted me on Sept. 16, 1846. She had for some time been in delicate health, but several of her relations having died dropsical, she only got alarmed about herself on the appearance of swelling