Observations on a Means for preventing Cancerous Degeneration in Schirrous Congestion in the Breast. By M. le Professeur HALLE.

[From the *Nouveau Journal de Médecine*, June 1819.]

THE congestions of which I speak, consist in indurations, more or less considerable, comprised in the substance of the breast. Sometimes they form a round and unequal tubercle, extremely hard in its centre, round which a congestion takes place in the cellular tissue; which congestion is firmer in proportion to its nearer approach to the centres occupied by the primitive congestion. Sometimes these tubercles have been disseminated in a granular form, of the size of hemp-seed, more or less connected and grouped together, but always very hard. The surface of the skin over the seat of the tubercles, is a little depressed; the sub-cutaneous tissue appears to be contracted; and the tissue even of the skin at length adheres to the centre of one or more tubercles, and becomes thinner in this place. In this point, not particularly painful on pressure from the finger, lancinating pains are felt, as if the part were pierced by an awl; they return after divers intervals, and gradually become more frequent. Firm and sensible cords often seem to extend from the seat of congestion in the breast towards the axilla, the rest of the breast remaining supple and free.

We cannot doubt, in these cases, what their termination would be sooner or later, if the disease were abandoned to itself.

Having seen many of these tumors, in circumstances which would not permit me to expect from the operation but an ephemeral success, with almost a certainty of relapse, I have resorted to the following mode of treatment:

I had a poultice made of linseed-meal, often mixed with the pulp of carrots, and then moistened with the expressed juice of carrots. The poultice having been prepared, and very hot, I added to it a little lard, (half an ounce to a poultice intended to cover the breast,) to render it unctuous, and to prevent it becoming too soon cold, and drying and adhering to the skin. At the instant of its application, I covered the poultice with from half an ounce to an ounce of the powder of hemlock, which was mingled with the surface of the poultice intended to come in contact with the skin.

This poultice was kept applied during six hours in the day; it was then renewed. I had it also applied in the evening, to remain on all night. Sometimes I have it used only at night.

I have very often been content with this linseed-poultice, always moistened with lard, and covered with the cicuta powder.

The lancinating pains have constantly ceased after a few days. The congestion surrounding the hard centre, has disappeared by resolution. The centre has appeared to me to diminish in hardness and extent; sometimes it has seemed to dissipate itself; but it is well known that we must not flatter ourselves with the expectation of entirely resolving the hardness of a part that is disorganized. The progress of the disease has, however, been at least arrested, and its degenerescence, I hope, indefinitely adjoined. I could adduce six very striking examples of this success.

It has occurred to me, to be consulted respecting an ulcerated cancer, established on an extensive tumour, adherent, and consequently not at all proper for the operation. The edges of the ulcer formed hard welts, and were the seats of new darting pains, which announced the further extension of ulceration. I had the poultice just described applied. It is certain that the darting pains have ceased, that the hard welts have become soft, and subsided, that the surface of the ulcer has assumed a better colour, and that the suppuration is no longer ichorous. But, as the cancer was accompanied with deep-seated pains darting into the chest, notwithstanding the amelioration of the external cancer, the internal pains have continued, and perhaps increased. I do not believe that this disease can have a fortunate termination. I have since learned that the internal disease continued its progress.

I can however assert, that, in a pulmonary affection, the progress of which was slow, in which hemoptysis to a great extent was frequently renewed, which had been preceded by the external signs of a cancerous disposition, and which was accompanied by lancinating pains, that seemed to indicate the same disease as the cause of this phthisis, the internal use of the *powder of cicuta* (and not the extract, although prepared in the manner directed by Storck,) has appeared to moderate the pains, and prolong the issue of the malady beyond the period at which it would otherwise have been fatal; that is to say, for several years, and with alleviation.

I have then, in general, advised, both externally and internally, the *powder of cicuta*, in preference to the extract. Internally, I have always given it in progressive doses, commencing from eight to twelve grains, and increasing this dose daily until it produced some degree of vertigo, which has commonly taken place when the dose has been carried to

twenty grains: I then diminished the dose two grains; and I continued it in this quantity during from eight to fifteen days, again assuming the increasing progression, and constantly following the same method, to an almost indefinite extent.

I often add *camphor* to the powder of *cicuta*, to prevent the vertigo, and the narcotic, which are often joined with the other effects of this remedy.

This method of employing *cicuta*, both externally and internally, has succeeded with me in chronic and obstinate cases of neuralgia: but the success obtained in the first attacks of these pains, is not always sustained in the recurrences of them.

As I have not regarded the use of *cicuta* as a new thing, since its advantages had been already stated by some illustrious practitioners, I have only spoken to my colleagues of the method which I have described, in circumstances where its employment appeared to me to be appropriate; seeing nothing remarkable in it, but the extent to which I carried its application; the perseverance I have given to it; the exclusion of other means, except those which accidents sometimes require,—as general or local bleedings; and, lastly, the preference which I give, whether externally or internally, to the powder over the extract, however prepared; for the doses with which the sensible signs of its action are manifested, marked by vertigo, especially when it is used internally, and by the extinction of pains when applied externally, may thus be easily appreciated, and even calculated, and give to the administration of this remedy a very advantageous means of precision.

This method appears to me to have also the advantage of isolating the peculiar effects of an active, but too often neglected, and even forgotten or despised, remedy, from the want of having been employed in a proper manner.

Case of Vaccination terminating fatally.

[Communicated by E. E. LUCAS, M.D., Hatfield.]

THE following case, in which vaccination was followed by a fatal termination, will, I doubt not, prove sufficiently interesting to claim insertion in the REPOSITORY.—C. C., son of the Rev. Mr. C., aged seven months, having been in perfect health from the day of his birth, was vaccinated, June 26th, with lymph obtained from the National Vaccine Establish-