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EFFECT OF SULPHATE OF QUINIA ON THE SPLEEN.

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WHILE following the clinics of M. Piorry, at La Pitié, our attention was called to some observations made by this distinguished physician with regard to the action of the sulphate of quinia upon the spleen in cases of intermittent fever. A careful and prolonged examination of the cases which appeared from time to time in his wards, served to convince us of the truth of Piorry's statements. It is thought that some brief notes of a few cases cannot fail of being interesting to the readers of the Journal.

CASE I., æt. 18, entered the Hospital with intermittent fever of the quotidian type, on the 14th. All the organs were healthy except the spleen, the length of which was seven inches and ten lines, breadth five inches five lines. On the morning of the 15th 3 ss. sulph. quinia was administered; twenty minutes after, percussion demonstrated that the hypertrophied organ had been reduced to six inches six lines in length, and to four inches four lines in breadth. The paroxysms were diminished in intensity, but persisted until the 18th; the spleen preserving its reduced volume. 19th. ʒij. sulph. quinia; twenty minutes after, the spleen presented only three inches five lines in length, and three inches three lines in breadth. From this time patient had no more attacks; the spleen preserved its volume, and on the 24th he went out of the Hospital cured.

CASE II., æt. 19, constitution robust, entered on the 9th, with a quotidian intermittent of three weeks' duration. At the period of his entrance the spleen measured six inches six lines in length. 3 i. sulph. quinia in two doses; in a few minutes it was reduced to five inches five lines in length, but after this it was impossible to obtain any further reduction, although doses as large as the above were administered. Vesicatories upon the splenic region, with general bleeding, had no more effect. Piorry thought that the sulph. quinia had not been given in sufficient quantity, and accordingly on the 21st, 9 A. M., 3 i. at a single dose; twenty minutes after, the spleen measured but three inches six lines in length, instead of five inches five lines. This large dose occasioned no difficulty whatever. The spleen preserved its volume, and on the 26th the patient was discharged cured.

CASE III., æt. 23, quotidian, entered 20th, after having had four paroxysms. Spleen five inches five lines in length, and four inches four lines broad. Other organs normal. 23d. 3 i. sulph. quinia in one dose. In ten minutes spleen reduced to four inches seven lines in length, and

three inches six lines transversely. From this day the fever ceased. 24th. ፻ij. sulph. quinia; reduction in ten minutes, three inches six lines by three inches three lines. 27th. Discharged cured.

CASE IV., æt. 30, entered 6th. All the organs healthy except the spleen, which measured four inches seven lines by two inches six lines. 7th. Twelve minutes after the administration of ፻ij. of the salt, the spleen was reduced to four inches in length by two inches three lines in breadth; the heat and fever ceased. 8th. A dose of з ss. ; in ten minutes spleen measured but three inches three lines, by two inches three lines. Discharged cured on the 10th.

The foregoing summary of a few cases, although drawn up with too much brevity, will suffice to illustrate this recent discovery.

The urine has been repeatedly analyzed, and with nearly the same results; for example, ten minutes after a dose of з i. sulph. quinia had been administered to a patient, з iv. of his urine was found by M. Bourchartd to contain ss. gr. of the alkaloid. The hypertrophy of the organ remains always the same in the different stages of the fever.

Piorry contends that "the fever is not the cause, but the manifestation, of the pathological condition of the spleen." In support of this theory he refers to several cases, from which we select the following:—"Two persons, after having fallen violently upon the left side, experienced in the region of the spleen a permanent pain, after an interval of fifteen days in one case, of six days only in the other—beginning by an access of fever of the quotidian type in the first case, by a quartan in the second. At their entrance into the Hospital both presented a daily paroxysm very complete. In both the pain in the splenic region augmented on pressure, especially in the inferior part of the circumference of the organ. A bleeding in one case was sufficient to remove all the symptoms; the sanguineous depletion dissipated the pain in the other case, and reduced almost entirely the febrile accessions, which did not disappear completely until after the administration of ፻ i. sulph. quinia. The first was cured in 48 hours, the second in four days. We see here paroxysms follow the sufferings of the spleen in a very evident manner; on the other side, we have found that this organ augments very sensibly by a repetition of the paroxysms. Are we not right in concluding, that things occur in an analogous manner in marsh fever, and that in both cases the fever is not the cause, but the result of the disease of the spleen?" He teaches also that if the remedies are directed to this organ so as to reduce it to its normal volume, there is no danger of a relapse, and that there can be no radical cure unless this be effected.

We might here remark, that though the observations of M. Piorry seem to prove that the spleen is hypertrophied in all intermittents, yet there are many eminent pathologists who have entertained a contrary opinion. M. Bailly, for example, in thirty-three post-mortem examinations of persons who died from this affection, found only two cases in which the spleen was enlarged. Whatever may be the fact with regard to this, or to the theory of M. Piorry, of this much we are certain, that the administration of the sulphate of quinia in large doses causes an almost instantaneous reduction of the spleen when enlarged.

The whole subject may not be unworthy the notice of American practitioners who reside in those districts in which intermittents prevail. It would be interesting to observe if bleeding in the cold stage, the use of the cornus Florida, eupatorium perfoliatum, and the various other remedies employed in this disease, produce the same effect.

To those who are unaccustomed to percussion, it may seem impracticable to measure any of the viscera with the precision indicated above. With the ordinary method this is at least difficult; but if auscultatory percussion be employed as invented by Drs. Camman and Clark, of New York, the spleen and many other internal organs can be measured with almost mathematical accuracy.

D. J. M.

Paris, September, 1841.

MULTIPAROUS LABOR.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—The following case of multiparient labor, which occurred in my practice about two weeks since, you are at liberty to publish in your Journal, if you consider it worthy of notice.

I was called obstetrically to attend Mrs. P., who is an uncommonly robust, healthy woman, and the mother of several children; but found, on my arrival, that she had just given birth to a child of the medium size, having had very few premonitory symptoms of such an event. I immediately proceeded to remove the placenta, but, on examination, found the head of another child favorably presenting, enveloped in another placenta, the membranes of which were unbroken. The pains, however, had ceased, and as no untoward symptoms occurred, I suffered the patient to remain in that situation for about three hours, when the pains returned and she was soon delivered of a second child. On making an examination again, I directly discovered, to my astonishment, the head of a third child presented (equally as favorably as the second), of which she was also soon delivered. All three of the children are still alive and doing well; their aggregate weight is about twenty pounds. The mother was able, on the second day after her confinement, to walk across the room, and still remains remarkably comfortable.

L. N. BEARDSLEY.

Milford, Ct., Jan. 13th, 1842.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

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It is a fact with which all who are at all conversant with this subject are familiar, that within the last few years the sciences of medicine and surgery, particularly the latter, awakening from their long slumber, and shaking from them the drowsiness and inactivity in which they had been wrapped, have in the rapidity with which they have progressed towards perfection, equalled, if not surpassed, the glorious strides which have been made