

—how much had drained off could not be computed. The water resembled, in color and consistence, that which I have sometimes seen drawn in cases of ascites. Pains returned after an interval of half an hour, and delivery was soon accomplished. Child perfectly formed, and made some ineffectual efforts to breathe; but the common means of resuscitation failed to produce the desired effect. The mother got about house in ten or twelve days, but was obliged to take her bed again, in consequence of one of the inferior extremities becoming anasarcaous. From this she soon recovered, and her health became good. In 1825, she again became pregnant, and near the end of the eighth month was delivered of a dead child in a state of putrefaction. In 1826, this unfortunate woman again found herself pregnant, and went her full time; not, however, without feeling much uncommon pain and tension of the abdomen; was then delivered of a poor, feeble child, that never exhibited any other signs of life than one feeble gasp. The waters were abundant, but less than in the instance above. She was about house in eight days. In 1827, she again became pregnant, and was delivered, Sept. 12th, 1828, of a fine healthy boy.

Queries.—There was evidently a morbid state of the uterus and its appendages, brought on without assignable cause, and terminating without any remedy but that of nature. Was the derangement altogether functional? Why should abundant water, in the first instance, be contained within the body of the child; and in the second, within the parts of the mother?

II.

On the Use of Opium in Inflammatory Diseases. Communicated in a letter to Professor V. MOTT.

By F. G. KING, M.D., of New-York.

[The practice of administering opium in inflammatory diseases was proposed several years ago by the celebrated Dr. Armstrong, of London. It is a practice, however, by no means generally adopted throughout the country, and before transferring to our pages the following extract from the last American Journal, we esteem it a duty to caution the inexperienced practitioner against the too indiscriminate application of the precept it contains. If opium were to be given in fever without previous and thorough evacuation, the result would doubtless be fatal in a majority of cases; and it behoves us to reflect deeply, examine the case in all its bearings, and bring into exercise our best judgment, before adopting a treatment which, directed by skill and experience like that of Dr. Post, may be eminently successful.]

IN reply to your inquiries as to the use of anodynes and opium by the late Dr. Post, I have to remark, that in conversation with him some two years past, relative to Dr. Armstrong's practice in inflammatory diseases, he told me that the use of opium, as recommended by that gentleman, (except in *larger doses*,) was corroborated by his own experience for a long series of years, and that to him it was by no means a novelty; for that in 1804 he was called to a child about three years of age, suffering under a violent pneumonic attack, accompanied

by pain, cough, and great febrile excitement. That he accordingly bled, blistered, and evacuated the patient, afterwards placing him under the use of antimonials, but all without benefit. Matters proceeded from bad to worse, until the child, exhausted by constant cough and excessive restlessness, seemed nearly at the point of death. Under these circumstances, he determined to quiet all these irritating symptoms by a powerful anodyne, and accordingly exhibited sixty drops of laudanum. Two hours after, he was called to the child, then supposed by its parents to be dying. He found the features sunk, the surface covered with a cold clammy sweat, and secretions of an unpleasant appearance about the eyes and nostrils, but the pulse had diminished in frequency, and was more full; the respiration was slower, and everything indicated the full and desired action of the anodyne. The parents were astonished to hear the physician say that the child would soon be better. The next morning all untoward symptoms had subsided, and the child became gradually convalescent and recovered.

This was his first trial of anodynes in such affections, (his experiment, if you please,) but a few months afterwards, a similar case occurring, he immediately resorted to the anodyne, depletion and evacuants having been premised, and with similar success; since which period he has generally continued that mode of practice; latterly, however, substituting the Dover's powder, in place of laudanum, in pneumonic attacks.

In 1810 he was called in consultation upon a gentleman in Jersey, suffering under enteritis. He found that he had been repeatedly bled, blistered, and evacuated, but to no advantage; the pain still continued acute; the pulse was small, frequent, and corded; the skin dry and hot. Under these circumstances, he suggested the propriety of exhibiting a powerful anodyne, in order to quiet all irritation, and give nature an opportunity of recovering herself. After a little hesitation on the part of the attending physician, it was finally determined to adopt the course proposed, and one hundred drops of laudanum were directed. An hour elapsed, no sensible effect having been produced, when the dose was repeated, and in half an hour the patient was under its full influence. He awoke the next day free from pain or tenderness, and so recovered. The same gentleman has been frequently attacked since with the same affection, and uniformly after being bled and evacuated, he has recourse to his anodyne, which rarely fails to quell the disease. But to be efficacious, the dose must be *heroic*; at least, such was the opinion of Dr. Post, who often remarked that practitioners, especially in England and France, were not aware of the value of opium in inflammatory diseases, for even when employing it in such cases, their doses were too trivial to exert any marked influence over the malady. He himself always exhibited it under the opinion, that to obtain its soothing effect upon the system, and its *paralyzing* influence over the disease, it must be given in large doses. In diarrhœa and certain

conditions of dysentery, after having cleansed the passages, he employed laudanum or Dover's powder, with the happiest effect; in fact, he rarely used much else than salts and Dover's powder in diarrhœa, in adults. In his own case, he was no less prodigal of anodynes than with his patients. Being, as you well know, for many years a constant prey to pleuritic affections, his treatment of himself was short and efficacious, viz., blisters and purgatives, followed by eighty or one hundred drops of laudanum, which quieted his cough, allayed pain, and soon placed him in a condition to resume his business.

In conclusion, permit me to state an occurrence which took place under my own eyes, two years previous to his death. He was then violently attacked with pleurisy, accompanied with much fever, for which he had been purged and blistered, and at the period in question, was under the use of antimonials. At this time he directed me to give him seventy drops of laudanum. I remonstrated, directing his attention to the dryness of his skin, its increased heat, and the frequency and hardness of his pulse. His answer was, "believe in my experience rather than in your theory; give me seventy or eighty drops of laudanum, and an hour will convince you of its propriety." It was given, and within the hour his pulse became calm, full, and slow; his skin was covered with a gentle perspiration, and his condition strikingly improved. He left his bed the next day, and frequently since has said to me, "I think I have given you a clinical lecture that you will remember."

III.

ABSORPTION OF THE CRYSTALLINE LENS.

History of a Case of the Probable Absorption of the Crystalline Lenses of both Eyes, in consequence of local Irritation in the Fauces. Read at a late Meeting of the Boston Society for Medical Improvement.

By J. V. C. SMITH, M.D.

MARY ANN D., of this city, in the autumn of 1822,—then five years of age,—became suddenly ill, as was supposed, with the first symptoms of croup; but the course of treatment, instead of relieving her, manifestly increased the general debility, without materially diminishing the peculiar sensation of which she constantly complained in the throat. To the surprise of the family, the little sufferer continued in this painful condition several weeks, and, consequently, various ineffectual prescriptions were made. Some additional disease was now apprehended, as it was with extreme difficulty she made a full inspiration. It was conceived by some, that the action of the heart was actually suspended, whenever the lungs were thus inflated. This, however, rests on doubtful authority. A copious expectoration was next observed, so free, and at times so foetid, as to induce the parents to change all former opinions of her case, and conclude that she was in a pulmonary consumption. Several medical gentlemen, who saw her from time to time, coincided in this opinion.

It is remarkable that Mary Ann lingered in this uncertain, and frequently distressed, condition, with but slight relief, till the following April. For the last two