

leading others to investigate the subject, and of inducing them to give the profession the result of their experience, I have thrown out these few observations.

Bedford, Jan. 22, 1844.

## THE HOMŒOPATHIC CURE OF HÆMATEMESIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As at the present time plausible pretensions, like the thin coating of base coin, so nearly resemble the genuine bullion of medical science that they frequently acquire a facility of currency, and are not easily detected during the rapid transmission necessary to common knowledge, you will, perhaps, permit me to make a few remarks on a case (given in THE LANCET of the 20th inst.) by Dr. Epps, purporting to be a cure of hæmatemesis by the administration of medicaments on strictly homœopathic principles. Dr. E. will, I am sure, excuse my seeking information on so important a subject as the healing art, involved as it is in “shadows, clouds, and darkness.” As Shakspeare says, “the toe of the peasant approaches so near the heel of the gentleman as sorely to gall his kibes,” and he who presumes to offer information on any subject connected with science is supposed to be always ready to give an answer to him that asketh. Having thus premised, I will at once plunge “in medias res.”

In the case related by Dr. E. it is evident to the most superficial of observers that the practitioner of legitimate medicine in attendance previously to the doctor's ministration has played (I doubt not most unwillingly) the jackal to the lion of homœopathy; the urgency of the disease had, in fact, been so far overcome, that the *vis medicatrix* was alone (as is seen by the sequel of the case) necessary to recovery. Let us submit the symptoms described by the doctor (accurately, I doubt not, according to the Hanemannian idea) to a superficial analysis by the aid of that “stumbling-block” to homœopathy, common sense. He found the patient present the following symptoms, taking them, *seriatim*, as they arise throughout Dr. E.'s narrative. Mark the formidable list well:—

### List of Symptoms.

White cheeks; white, blanched fingers, having a swollen transparency (what is that?) about them; exhaustion; half-closed eyes; anxiety; tongue blanched, with a tint indicative of approaching typhus (I have had some small share of experience in lingual diagnosis, but I confess this description of tongue is to me “quelque chose de nouveau”); cold sweats; thirst; pain round the waist; pain at the heart; heart-sickness; pain in the head; her eyes not closed

when asleep (I beg to inform the doctor on this point, that, save in feigned sleep, the cornea is rarely, if ever, completely covered by the lids); heat of forehead; pain in stomach; fulness; heat of hands; pain of back; rumbling of bowels; day restlessness; sleep, with monocular distortion, &c. &c.

Here is a goodly array—all individually and collectively referrible to the obstinate costiveness, which was at length relieved by the natural innate powers of the system; and with its disappearance at once vanished, “as things that were,” the foregoing train of symptoms, hitherto allowed to proceed at “their own sweet will” (for ten days) by Dr. E.'s globuliculi. Shades of Hamilton and Abernethy where are ye!

The train of symptoms (observed through the microscopic optics of homœopathy) were, in the case of Mrs. W., evidently but the outward and visible signs of the derangement existing in the *primæ viæ*, overcome (after ten days' struggle) by the innate powers of the constitution alone, relieving the system by a copious unhealthy evacuation, in spite of China, opium, and other (antipsoric) remedies.

For the information of those who may not have seen the “Reine Arzneimittelleure,” I may mention that in strict homœopathy symptoms are alone combatted, proximate causes, and those groupings of isolated symptoms from which (by analogical reasoning) we draw our notions of disease, are disregarded entirely. The above-named work contains the detail of above eighty thousand “symptoms,” each having its appropriate homœopathic remedy; for instance, a globe of nux vomica causes, and, as a natural sequence, cures, about fourteen hundred of them (the “symptoms”) &c. &c.

With regard to the case (well and accurately detailed as it is) I merely make a superficial running comment, leaving it to your numberless readers (non-medical and otherwise) to fill up the outline to their own individual taste. I have, however, said sufficient to “mark it” as having been an instance in which the narrator has (using his own words) “retched violently and brought up nothing;” although homœopathy may, as in the case of Dr. Gilchrist, act “like a charm than ordinary drugs, though the dose, taken once in eight days, be not so much as an ordinary pinch of snuff.” In this instance, I presume, the Genevese doctor who forms the subject of Dr. Gilchrist's “Io Pæan,” was descended from him, of whom Butler thus speaks,—

“By his side a pouch he bore,  
Replete with strange hermetic powder,  
That wounds nine miles point blank would solder,  
By skillful chemist, with great cost,  
Extracted from a rotten post,  
But of a heavenlier influence  
Than that which mountebanks dispense,  
Though by Promethean fire made,  
As they do quack that drive that trade.”

Here the cure was perfected by means of epistolary communication, the powder being similar to that of "pickle herring," so well described by Dr. Baynard (on Cold Baths, 1700).

Swift, in his description of the renowned and never-to-be-forgotten "University of Lagado," has (most unaccountably to me) left out the homœopathic professor, who is certainly worthy to hold a place amongst the "clariores et digniores" that figure in his account of that college. Should a similar establishment ever be founded, however worthily the other chairs of science may be filled, it will (like Aladdin's hall, minus the roc's egg) still be incomplete without the addle-egg of homœopathy,—

"Much 'will have' been done,  
But more remains to do."

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES T. MACKIN, M.D.

Rushall, Jan. 26, 1844.

## TERMS IN PRESCRIPTIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me, through the medium of your widely-diffused Journal, to suggest to the profession at large the advantage of uniformly employing in prescriptions the term *protochloride*, instead of *chloride*, of mercury, when calomel is meant. It may, perhaps, be replied, that the prefix *proto* is supererogatory, calomel being legitimately entitled, in chemical language, to either of the above designations. But I think the extreme danger in practice liable to attend the administration of the *bichloride*, instead of the simple chloride of mercury, warrants our taking scrupulous pains, by our mode of diction, to prevent the probable occurrence of such an accident. Better, indeed, in writing prescriptions, to abandon scientific language altogether, and return to the old and barbarous dark-age term of *calomel*, than run the risk of giving a patient so virulent a substance as corrosive sublimate instead. Of this, however, I think there would be little likelihood (attributable to diction) were the prefix *proto* always adopted in speaking or writing of the simple chloride. Something like a precedent for such caution appears in the change long ago effected in the technical name of *paregoric*, now called *tinct. camph. co.*, instead of *tinct. opii camphorata*, doubtless to avoid confusing it with the plain *tinct. opii*. It will be conceded by all that a clear distinction between the two chlorides of mercury is, at least, as important as between the preparations above specified. I am, Sir, yours obediently,

SECURUS.

London, Jan. 22, 1844.

## CHELTENHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL.

### OSSIFIC DEPOSIT IN THE MITRAL VALVE.

### CONGESTION OF LUNGS AND LIVER.

Reported by Mr. F. H. COLT.

H. CLIFFORD, ætat. 28, admitted May 8, 1843, under Dr. Gibney. Is a brickmaker by trade, and therefore much exposed to cold and wet. He is of a strong muscular frame, and has a well-formed chest. His illness commenced three months ago, at which time he got wet through, and neglected to change his clothes. He was then affected with a tightness across the upper part of the chest on inspiration, and spitting of blood, which lasted three weeks. The blood expectorated was of a florid red colour. He has never had an attack of acute rheumatism.

*Present State.*—A blowing murmur is heard on a line with the right nipple. There is great prominence of the precordial region. The impulse of the heart may be seen over the upper part of the abdomen, the epigastrium, and as far as the right hypochondrium. The head, when applied to the chest, is raised perceptibly at each pulsation. The dulness on percussion over the left side of the chest is greater than natural. The lips are rather blue. There is no swelling or pulsation of the jugulars. The pulse is quick, weak, and intermittent; two beats tolerably regular, and then three so quick as scarcely to be counted. He spits dark-coloured blood, in clots, in the morning, and starts a great deal in his sleep. The countenance is anxious, the tongue white, and the stools of a dark colour. The urine is natural. He is subject to cramps in the calves of the legs. A blister was applied to the region of the heart. Digitalis, morphia, and squills were administered internally.

17. His state is nearly the same as on his entrance. Pulse slower, impulse of the heart still very violent. On applying the hand over the liver an emphysematous crackling is felt on full inspiration. He had formerly received severe blows on the right side, and is subject to the sensation which emphysema occasions. The digitalis is discontinued, and he is bled to twelve ounces. The other medicines are continued, with the addition of pills, containing small doses of aloes and calomel.

29. Pain in the right side as before. The palpitation is worse if he attempts to sit up in bed. A blister to the back.

31. He is suffering under an attack of vomiting and purging. Omit the pills. Saline effervescing draught every two hours. There is pain in the right side of the abdo-