A. Dissertation
On the Therapeutical Value of Certain Drugs.
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It tends to very high powers of observation to note the fact that we live in a very enquiring age. It would indeed be a very difficult matter to name any interesting or important branch of knowledge in which this spirit of inquiry does not become palpably manifest. Individuals being equally endowed by Providence with the faculties of the mind, it follows from the remarkable diffusion of the means of enlightenment, that all departments of science should be cultivated by increased numbers of devotees, and that an impulse, should hence be received by all manner of useful information. This spirit of inquiry exhibits itself as might be naturally expected, not only in a desire to add to the mass of knowledge which has accumulated in the lapse of ages, but to improve upon that which tradition has delivered to us, and to correct and dispense the misconceptions and errors.
of our forefathers. As I have said, it would be hard to mention what science or department of useful knowledge, has not in this way, but with increased attention of late years, it is for me to add that our own great science of medicine has certainly not lagged behind, and shows well in a general survey of the advantages that distinguish our age. We must not however be too presumptuous, regarding with much self-satisfaction, the present aspect of Medical Science, looking at our improved means of diagnosis, and to the greater certainty with which, we can for tell the issue of a case, let us dismiss a part of this feeling of pride and justly admit the great debt we are under to those laborers who have passed away. The two did good work in their great unexplored regions, their teachings determined the practice of the times, and when we take a review of those records of experience they have left, we ought to question the infallibility of modern times. Knowing well that such spurious, are rarely applicable to the living of humanity.
Those great oracles of practice in our midst, who are perpetually asserting dogmas, which receive contradictions from authorities equally high, ought especially to be looked upon with suspicion. I think we may safely infer that no revolution in practice has tended so much to the salvation of life, as that which has been posthumously maintained. It would be more creditable to suspect some secret source of fallacy, than to flatter ourselves on discoveries that are too truly wonderful. We know how mysteriously Nature sometimes operates, and we know that cases presenting features of the most precise similarity, often take unaccountably different courses; we know that epidemics, in modes equally unaccountable vary in degree of mortality at different times, seasons, or ages, and I think that these and other circumstances teach lessons of modesty to modern conceit whereby it might greatly profit, if it did but give sufficient heed to their weight and fact.

The progress of the art of cure, in so far as the administration of drugs at least
is concerned, does not offer a very great deal of matter for congratulation; week by week and month by month, periodical letters are issued wherein drugs of a new kind, or in a new application are lauded for their virtues to the skies. Well conducted trials of these alleged virtues, but too frequently lead to negative results. Careful observation of the natural history and progress of a disease, will show how barren of the effect is the remedy recommended, upon symptoms whether in cutting short their advancement, moderating the danger they indicate, or relieving the pain. I have heard an illustrious Professor of Anatomy regretting how with the progress of Pathology Histology Therapeutics had by no means kept pace. He expressed himself hopefully nevertheless, as to its future. In the pages which are to follow I have thrown together some remarks which are founded upon experience. That experience, no doubt, has been limited, but I may say conscientiously that it has been attended with considerable pains taken to care. Little that is new will be found,
but I think, by putting alleged facts to the test of trial and calmly discussing the result, we are rendering service to medicine second only to the discovery of a new and powerful remedy, if second to that it can be called. In this task I have been engaged, and, as earnest followers of medicine, to measure the true value of instruments on which we are obliged to rely. Without further preface I proceed to illustrate the actions of those particular drugs that I have selected, as forming the subject-matter of this dissertation —

**Arsenic**

We have evidence and counter evidence, as to the habitual and daily use of this poison by the inhabitants of Styria, and the probabilities all seem to be against the supposed fact of its employment in this way. Travellers inform us of the extreme poverty of the circumstances of this people — and that their mortal span does not seem to be at all abbreviated by the consumption in enormous quantities of a most dangerous irritant poison. Reasoning from our knowledge of the physiological and toxic effects of Arsenic, we must deem
It can enter improbability that such quantities could be harmlessly ingested. It is one of those questions, where we may be hard-holed faith, less even to a demand of demonstration, or sensible evidence. Given, however, as a class of human beings who enjoy an immunity from the ordinary effects of Arsenic in poisonous doses, and who daily introduce it into their system, we might be led to expect in them, from our acquaintance with its therapeutic effects, a surprising beauty of complications. For the minds of the profession must be getting yearly more satisfied as to the cosmetic influence of Arsenic upon the skin, when absorbed into the blood. Whereas in squamous diseases of the skin, not dependent upon a specific virus, that has tainted the system, will give Arsenic again trial, will, in all probability have good reason to be satisfied with the result. Then a dispensary student I recollect a friend remarking to the late Dr. Andrew PM (whose devotion to his profession, amiability of disposition, and readiness and amiability to communicate information will ever be remembered by
all students who enjoyed his acquaintance with gratitude (having) that arsenic could not be of much service in prostration, because a distinguished professor in the University has just been administering it with wanted success, and that he had never been able to cure a single case with it. In the words under that gentleman’s care a young girl had prostration sufficiently bad the Arsenical plan of treatment had been tried and proved a signal failure, and her skin was about to be smears with the highly extolled pitch balsam. But, said Dr. P., how long did she take arsenic? Oh, for full five weeks!” Then he said she should have it longer, you must not conclude arsenic to be a failure in prostration, after five weeks’ trial or you will not be giving it fair play.” He then by way of illustration, went on to give some particulars of a case of the same complaint that created a good deal of anxiety in the family of a friend of his own, a young country practitioner. The patient had for a long time been troubled with this scaly disease and had been
taking the pathological dose of the remedy for seven weeks without the slightest am
endment. The young surgeon was about to abandon it in despair but was happily
dissuaded from his purpose by Dr. G— who advised him to go on with the admini
stration of the solution for a short time still. Acting on this counsel the Arsenic was still given.
Perseverance was soon crowned with success. In a couple of weeks after the skin began to clear
and the pyramids to fall off, and the osseous structure was soon restored
to its pristine purity. Frequently patients are not distinguished for patience. They
but a chronic course of Medicine in chronic diseases; being anxious and
eager for an acute cure. In such cases the surgeon cannot judge of the
potency of a drug in controlling or curing a disease. It is not contended
of course that Arsenic will in all similar
cases prove an unfailling remedy, but
we have here a strong case in favor of its frequent efficacy; and one too which in
ducit, a caution of our formation of inferences, as to the alleged power of a
thing to which we have not given a fair and due trial, the develop-
mient of the physiological effect of arsenic, must not be taken as the period for withholding it. In cases of Syphillis or diseases of the cutaneous surface, it is probable indeed if we can to proceed in pursuing a curative effect, a curative effect from its use that this will occur coincidentally with its physiological influence. But we must not be quite discouraged, if along with its physiological symptoms, the symptoms of recovery do not at once become manifest. It is a drug wherein of its beneficial power is displayed sometimes in a short period, at other times after centuries, and continued and watchful exhibition. Very lately, I was associated in practice with a gentleman, when a case came under my care, which most definitely demonstrates the healing virtues of Arsenic in the class of diseases referred to. A young man about twenty six years of age applied to me about a collection of small
abscesses in the armpits and their severity which made their appearance in successive crops, and was of course, excessively painful. They were the size of pigeon eggs, if very rapid formation. In addition to these abscesses, I perceived an abundant excretion of psoriasis all over his body. For the collecting of abscesses, I prescribed besides the common topical treatment, a more liberal diet, and they soon ceased to trouble him. Thenceforth, however, I suggested that he should be put on a course of treatment, for the scaly eruption. He declined, however, it would be useless, seeing that it was a family complaint, from which many brothers and sisters were now suffering, that he had already been treated by several medical men, and that the disease was of eight years standing. He admitted, however, that he had never been for a long time to gather under medical care and on this occasion became anxious after a few days to be treated in some way, as he was only recently married and the psoriasis did not add to the amenities of married life. The psoriasis, in this case, meant the nightmare of the patient.
patient accordingly took five drops of the
Liquor Arsenicii, and for no longer a
period than four weeks. A most gratifying
improvement took place almost directly,
for it was observed after the lapse of a
single week's time. And after four weeks
had elapsed, the case was so far advanced
that further use of the medicine was
deemed unnecessary. At the end of two
weeks (during three of which the medicine
was withheld) I examined the surface of
Skin when the wide spread eruptions had
subsided, and had the pleasure of finding
the cutaneous structure perfectly pure
and free from disease. Now the pharma-
cological effects had barely manifested
themselves, although pricking at the stomach
was present to a slight degree. Such cases
as these, as I think, tolerably strong, can
belong to the catalogue of "Chills who win a
day, and down he dropsit!"

In reference to the mode whereby Arsenic,
when absorbed into the blood, so alters the
vascular system of the skin, and the
nutritive system of its cuticular covering, as
to arrest that diseased action which results
in squamous eruptions, no complete explanaion can be offered. We observe, however, in cases of chronic poisoning with this metallic poison, how the mucous surfaces become the seat of conjestion and inflammation, and it does not require a great stretch of imagination, as it is not perhaps bad physiology, to suppose, that its administration in a less degree, and with a curative object, gives rise to changes in the dermal as well as in the mucous surfaces as regards their vascular system, which as far as the former is concerned, results in a healthy circulation in those portions of congealed skin, until immediately beneath the patches of squamous eruptions.

As I have not had the opportunity of witnessing the treatment of other diseases by arsenic I forbear from any remarks concerning this -

**Iron**

The popularity and usefulness of the preparations of iron have given rise to an excessive number of them, whereof many of them are very elegant and pleasant. The most marked effect of iron, are pro=
lably as well produced by one as by another of these preparations, and hence, there does not appear to be any necessity for multiplying them to the extent that has been practiced. However, if as is alleged, the delirium of some patients objection is found to be less affected by a particular preparation of the metal than by others, an obvious advantage results. Callers experience with the preparations of iron led him to say

"We have found the simple most as effective as any other preparation, and we have al-
ways found the stomachs bear it better."

It is impossible to discuss in an essay like
this all or even many of the applications
of iron in practical medicine. It's fasci-
nating power is a very interesting study.
Although the apparent difficulty of the
smallness of the quantity of iron normally in
the blood rather opposes itself to the theory that
iron possesses all the blood forming properties
ascribed to it, yet, considering the accumulated
experience of observing men, we are bound
to regard it as one short anchor in
Anemia. When we administer iron with the
object of enriching the blood - as for example
in Ammonia, we must not expect in
instantaneous improvement, in the symptoms
because here is a cumulative drug, and
because especially, that mass of circulating
fluid has to be changed. Hence, very fre-
quently, we must give a prolonged course
of the medicine before the characteristic
pulver is banished from the face, and be-
fore the return of menstruation shows the
power of the ferruginous remedy, let the
distinction be drawn between the remedy as
administered in the diseases of Anemia and
the Cachexia, and as given in Maladies
pursuing an acuter course. In the former
we give it to remove a chronic settled state
of constitution, in the latter we give it with
a life saving object in view. In latter are
probably the more simple objects to study,
but I shall afterwards speak of the use
of the remedy in certain chronic local
conditions, which come to affect the consti-
tution over which a ferruginous remedy
possesses a very happy influence. The
contact of Medical men with that fatal form
of malignant sore throat termed Diphtheria
Mud, of late years, have enabled
them to say with considerable confidence
whether or not the Murialated tincture often
is of service to any life-saving attempt in that
affection. Dr. Stedup of Birmingham was
the first to recommend it to the profession,
and, since then, it has been tried all over
the country. Repeatedly, by most practitioners
I have seen it given both in Diphtheria
and Scarlet fever, when the sore-throats are
very little different, whether the disease may
be essentially - i.e., as morbid poisons -
be of benefit could be said to accrue from its
use in any case, for when treatment appears
to influence the local and constitutional
symptoms of diphtheria beneficially, support
and stimulate, in the absence of drugs, or
with only those of the simplest kind, appeared
to do all the good. Mechanical contact with
the larynx and pharynx - when the blood
poison of this malady spreads most of its
violence - by means of the tincture of the
Murialate of Form in solution, may certainly
be of some use, but I think we must reject
the question as unsettled as to its constitutional
influence after this serious disease. I have
had the pleasure of conferring with several.
practitioners on this question, and they have mostly said that, while they usually give Mercurial tincture often in this disease, in the absence of our knowledge of anything better, this does not arise from any great faith in its power, but simply from an acquiescence with authority, and a desire to give their patients that chance of recovery which in this disease the remedy is said to hold forth. In another blood disease, and likewise in large doses, the Mercurial tincture of Iron has been highly lauded. An antiseptic power has been ascribed to it, and in Erysipelas, — an acknowledged blood disease, — we might anticipate some benefit from its administration. But here the utmost caution is also necessary. Before admitting that it possesses a property whereby it exerts a power over the disease in question, we must establish by unquestionable proof, the fact that many bad cases have got well under its influence at a time when the disease has been proved to prove fatal. It is properly the habit now a-...
and though he commonly gets letters it would seem to involve, rather an exaggerated estimate of the virtues of the immured stature of form to believe that it has contributed in such cases to the salvation of life.

A case is here offered for consideration in an unmarried woman thirty five years of age, who had erysipelas in a very violent form, the whole foot and calf of the leg, the left leg being enormously swollen. The virtue of the stil drops was engaged. The disease followed its usual course and occurred in a very delicate anemic woman. The supporting treatment was adopted. Hot tea and wine being given unspared. The swelling was subsiding in the most satisfactory manner in the leg and foot and the stil drops were sedulously and faithfully taken. But just then the other leg and foot, began to be similarly affected, and a patch of erysipelas inflammation appeared on the neck. The immured stature of form was still taken with the greatest regularity and the supporting measures were used. Shortly afterwards a smart
attack of erysipelas, made its appearance on the face, simultaneously with its occurrence in the opposite leg to that first attacked. Ultimately, however, after the space of more than two months, the erysipelas had disappeared. Although even then occasional erysipelas flares would show itself upon the foot or face, in the issue of the case recovery, some might see a beautiful cure performed by the continuous giving of cold drafts, I do not think that the case will at all bear such a construction. If the exhibition of the remedial treatment often fortified the constitution against the introd of disease, or some of the means to change, attendent on surgical operations, as some alleged, then we should certainly anticipate for a person taking it, a freedom from attacks of erysipelas when it is said to be so valuable. Let me just add that the patient had long been the subject of amenorrhea, although I am not aware that the condition of the blood should affect the proper physiological susceptibiliy of being influenced by the remedy. This is a class of functional disorders.
when a ferruginous dreg appears to act like a charm. If Opium abates or moderates excessive tisues, and other saline evacuations, then quite as certainly, and with equal benefit and potency, affects leucorrhoal discharges not arising from known organic disease. In my limited experience I have seen a very great number of cases testifying to this fact. There is one, in particular, where a leucorrhoal discharge had existed for upwards of three years, and the patient feared to ask Medical Opinion from a death of cancer. Her menopause was past, and her life was disturbed by the presence of this discharge. A domestic bereavement had been the first date of its coming on. And, since then, without an hour intermission, the watchful patient was constantly afflicted by it. There was no pain, and menstruation was regular. She took five grains twice three times a day of the arsenio-citrit of Ison, and, in two days she was transported to find that there was not a single drop of foetid tisues, discharge. Thinking she was quite well, she then left it off.
but had no sooner done so than the complaint returned. After this relapse occurred, she did not resume the use of the medicine until after four weeks, when she had a very severe attack and dangerous attack of phlegmasia dolens. The discharge was then very profuse, but vaginal examination refuted the idea of secession disease. The moistened tincture of iron was given, the discharge ceased, and the swelling of the body by consequentaneously subsided. The day she omitted the medicine (viz. the fourth day from its commencement) and the phlegmasia dolens returned worse than ever. The drug was forthwith administered and carefully given throughout the case. The phlegmasia dolens and the leukorrhoea subsided simultaneously, and convalescence ultimately was established. Seven weeks after (the leg having gained strength very slowly) I saw her taking a brisk walk, and she expressed herself as perfectly well. She declared, however, she could not find it in her heart to leave off the still drops. This case is interesting from another point of view, that as illustration of the astonishing
properties of iron in controlling leucorrhoeal discharges, but I forbear from instituting an inquiry in this place as to the causes of puerperia alba as being foreign to my purpose.

The case I have here given a few details of in order to set forth the virtues of iron in such affections, is chosen only as being a very striking one. I could relate many others, where this metallic medicine has proved equally serviceable in arresting similar long continued uterine discharges with the utmost promptitude. From a contrast of its effects with those of drugs possessing similar properties in this application, the conclusions must be come to, that iron is superior to them all.

It having been discovered, a few days ago, in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, that the succedrine Carbonate of Iron was a most useful astringent in diarrhoæa, I have been induced to make trial of it. The first case in which I used it was in connection with dispensary practice. A Woman in the Lawn Market, shortly after confinement, suffered from abscess of the left mamma. A constant
had been plunged into the breast in the most reckless manner, by a student, long before the formation of pus indicated the propriety of the procedure, and, an arterial branch of some size having been wounded, profuse haemorrhage was the result. The operator it was declared, had fled when he saw the cuttery pumping out the blood, and the poor woman must nearly have died to death. The pallor of her lips and the smallness of her pulses were almost remarkable, she had fainted repeatedly, and nausea and vomiting were excessive. When called in to see her from the Cowgate Dispensary, I had to treat this dreadful nausea, vomiting, and a most troublesome attack of diarrhoea, the woman was evidently in the most instant peril from the haemorrhage she had suffered. She was ordered five grain dose of the Saccharine Carbonate of Iron, and doses of Medicinal Naphtha as frequently. The effect of the medicine was wonderful. The sickness and the purging went away together. When the Carbonate was stopped however, the purging returned, but inmodi
cantly on its prescption it abated. That its cessation was quite the opposite of a concurrence was proved by the fact that it occurred on repeated occasions con-
currently with the assumption of the E- inhibition of the drug. I regret to say that subsequent experience, as assistant to the Guttman, speaks of, by no means corroborate the original happy experience of it, and that, in the diarrhoeas alike of infancy and mature life, it has failed as frequently as other astringents. From its occasional good services in this appli-
cation, however, it seems to me that its virtues as an astringent should certainly be borne in mind.

Iodide of Potassium

Some time ago, a rather pertinacious dis-
cussion as to the action of Iodide of Potassium occupied the small type col-
umn of a popular medical journal. All were satisfied that it is a very valuable article of the materia medica. The Guttman, however, maintained that its great usefulness has somewhat interfered with, in consequence of occa-
usually giving rise to dyspepsia, this was denied by myself, as likewise the assertion that Iodide of Potassium was an uterine remedy and expelled the menstrual flow. I would offer a few remarks as to this last mentioned property. A case of chronic hepatitis, for which I prescribed this drug came under my care. The woman was fifty-three years of age and had not menstruated for eight years. After four weeks use of the medicine, there was no improvement in the hepatic symptoms, but a sanguineous discharge took place from the vagina, lasting a few days, and quite unaccompanied by any pain. She ceased taking the Iodide, and there was no recurrence of the hepatorespir.

A young stenuous girl of twelve years, who had never menstruated—took the medicine for two months. Just then a slight unhealthy flow of pure blood came from the vagina. The medicine, but not for this reason, was discontinued, and the discharge has not returned.

A young woman, thirty-two years of age, who
had never menstruated, took daily doses of the solution of potassium, as part of the treatment of sp discuss of the elbow. She had taken it for ten days only, when a hemmorhage occurred from the uterus. She still went on with the medicine, and the symptoms of constitutional debility that went along with the joint disease existed also, as the latter underwent amendment. After two months longer a second flow of blood proceeded from the vagina. At that time the medicine was left off, and although it is now six months ago, the uterine hemmorhage has not recurred in this case.

If these cases are fortuitous only, I think they look sufficiently like facts to preclude a presumption that there was a connection between the giving of the drug, and the origin of the hemmorhage. At all events if I could multiply such observations, I should come to rest upon them as facts that would influence my conduct of cases by means of the sulfide. In the rigid significance of
the term "menstrual" these discharges cannot be so characterized. They observed no periodicity, and it is uncertain how far we are justified—should salicylic acid potassium prove possessed of this property, in inducing, by means of medicine, an attack of uterine hemorrhage, at any chance time of life. It is a difficult matter, in forming an estimate of the physiological actions of drugs, to include in it all symptoms when the drug's action is long of development.

Salicylic acid potassium has been proved as a cholagogue, and I am certain that in more than one case of chronic hepatitis—and particularly in union with the park of digestion, as recommended by the Professor of materia medica—I have seen its use in mitigating and removing symptoms. In that morbid state of the hepatic secretion which conduces to the formation of gall stones, I am not aware that it has been employed hitherto as a remedy in which we can place some confidence. In fact have we any remedy for this tendency at all? In Optim
we have our emulating Amaryl, and, by large doses, we relieve the congestive agony of the transit of a gall stone. But these large doses must be enlarged if much employed, and hence if a drug can be named whose use even on one occasion alone has been attended with apparent benefit or ease, it is our duty to state what it is in order that further trial of it may be made, and accumulated experience prove its genuine value. Such in a very signal case of biliary calculi has been my experience with solutions of potassium, as the following case will show.

A woman, aged fifty three, had been for fifteen months subject to attacks of jaundice. The attacks were transitory, and left the skin. It quite natural, when they assisted. The yellow tinge of the skin was most intense, and dated from the time, when pains of the most dreadful kind were felt in the right hypochondrium for this distressing from the largest doses of morphia had apparently been insufficient to afford relief. Upon the
complications improved, as the pain entirely went away. But she lived in constant dread of the return of the "spasms" as she called them. These attacks usually came on every week, and sometimes with great frequency. Her stools were putrid and she had frequently remarked small bodies in them resembling peas. At the time I became acquainted with the case I was unable to procure any of these bodies which were too clearly urinary calculi. The poor woman was emaciated and much worn by her sufferings. Sleep, appetite, and all the enjoyments of life were completely strangers, and the relatives anticipated nothing else than a fatal issue. She was placed temporarily under any care, and implored me to let her have a trial of some medicine as a last chance. Just then a fearful attack supervened, attended with intense sickness, acute pain, and great prostration. This passed off in the course of the day, and was partially relieved by powerful opiates. The color of the skin was very dark. On the morning of the following day she
took the first dose of a purgative, in the proportion of five grains of the iodide of potassium, to an ounce of water and continued it three times daily. That day passed off with a mild attack. The next day passed off with no attack at all. No attack passed off yet so repeatedly. And now it is nine months since and the woman has remained free from pain and distress. She has gained flesh, spirits, and appetite, always slept well, and never was better in her life.

Members of the profession who are reasonably kind of believing will suspect a coincidence in the above case, which will appear to them almost too charming. Here the iodide if it acted at all must have done so with the promptitude and rapidity of a purgative. The woman took it in all for the space of a month and it appeared to alter her constitution directly. I trust it will constitute a claim for a trial in many similar cases, as we have in such cases no drug on which we can rely as possessed of any efficiency. If it has been only a coincidence I
cannot do better than wish myself and fellow graduates, a multiplicity of such concordances in the course of their practice, as they cannot certainly be injurious to its prosperity!

Of the great usefulness of this drug it is a truth every one is aware, its prolonged action frequently reduces the size of the largest tumours ones, even when their cutaneous deposit it is often of good service. In one case of a hard and small fibres in a young girl, the iodide of potassic the long administered was proving of no service, and I recommended my friend who treated the case to try the Iod. Hyd. Kombi. This he did in the day referred to by Professor Christian in his lectures, and at the same time gave a little of the iodide of potassic internally. The result was uninterrupted improvement—And not long delayed and ultimate cure.

Its use in Syphilis is now well established. Its remarkable efficacy in Syphilis under the first recommendation by Dr. Williams is familiar to all medical men.
Although in Syphilis I have seen it tried, and proved to be beneficial, I shall not delay my reader with details of cases, as they would be mere recitation of the every day practical experience of medical men all over the country.

**Digitalis**

It is a question of the profoundest interest and one whose solution is of the highest difficulty, to determine how far, and by what kind of action drugs an often times, and exercise a curative power in the treat of Digitalis. I have seen cases of so called Bright's disease treated in Hospital and dismissed after a short time, with all the signs of anaemia completely dispelled. In these it is to be presumed there was not serious structural change in the kidney, otherwise I feared there would not be so many prompt and apparently perfect cures. In Cardiac diseases — diseases of the valvular apparatus — attended with Aneurysms, it has sometimes struck me that sufficient attention has not been given to the condition of the pulse as a warrant for the exhibition of medicines. Then with
Vascular disease of the heart, dropsy consists as a natural pathological sequence, let us attend to the pulse and see whether it be full, intermittent, fast, or, on the other hand, a pulse of same strength, though intermittent and not rapid. The first-mentioned character of the pulse is, as might be anticipated, fraught with a more gloomy prognosis; and in its presence we shall give our powerful drastic purgatives, or our diuretic medicines not only fruittlessly, but perhaps even, only to increase the danger of our patient while contemplating his safety and good. In the less frequent class, we may dare to hope for not only relief, but relief of so considerable a kind, as to entitle it to the name of almost a cure. Herein—viz. in the difference I have indicated in the pulse as characteristic of two varieties of cases, will probably be from the explanation of the fact which we always hear of i.e., the uncertainty of the action of diuretics. In one class of cases, a weak intermittent and irregular and within quicker pulse goes along with the Cardiac disease, and is the companion.
of dropsy; in the other the heart disease has
constantly caused dropsy, but the heart ir-
recture is powerful enough to overcome
a strong bent to the activities, and there is
still left some constitutional vigor and
vital energy. I would therefore respectfully
submit that the expression, "Uncertainty
of demerits," is hardly possessed of any
meaning, and that when this action is
apparently uncertain, the circumstance
will be always applicable by a reference
to the nature of the case, when it is sought
by their means to produce some desirable
influence. If the dropsy were the only
symptom by which we could form our judge
ment of an treatment, then indeed it might
be justified in following a promiscuous
practice. But while the dropsy is the pre-
ominate and decided symptom, take the
progressively fatal one, we are guided by
Pathology to determine its cause, and by
collateral symptoms we form our prognosis
as to the effect of treatment.
Mrs. S., a woman fifty five years of age, had
suffered from palpitation for some years
and from an arsenious swelling for
upwards of seven months. It was progressing slowly towards the trunk, and there was some dyspepsia and cough. On listening to the sounds in the thorax, I found rales at the base of both lungs posteriorly, and a Cardiac Murmur, indicative of Mitral Regurgitation. Nothing wrong was detected in the urinary system. Medicines to promote the secretion of water were tried unsuccessfully, and by these the lips were tapped to her great relief. This relief was temporary, for as the wound healed, the water receded. One of them was attacked by Syphilis, this rendered her very prostrated and under it she sank. Here then was a rapid pulse, but with no particular intermittence of beat.

Mrs. W. is sixty years of age and had suffered for six months from Anaemia of the inferior Extremities. As in the above recorded case, the distinct rales on the chest and the blue lips indicated obstruceted circulation and this indication was ratified by an examination of the chest when a mitral lobe, pointing out the same pathological change.
very plainly audible. There was slight dyspnoea and trifling cough. There was some degree of ascites, in addition to the edema of the lower limbs. She complained greatly of the strong palpitation, and her breathlessness on ascending stairs or hills. Her pulse was very distinctly intermittent, but possessed of some force, and by no means rapid. The intermission was, as if I may be allowed the expression, more deliberate than in the former case, and there was greater volume in the pulse. This woman took five drops of the tincture of Digitalis, with no other drug, every four hours, for the space of five days. During the first eight days of the treatment fears were entertained that it was to fail. But after the lapse of the first week, the abdominal distension subsided considerably, with slightly increased flow of urine, the ascites completely and some Pratt away, the febrile things less, and became in three weeks of their normal pitch. The legs in their turn diminished in the same gradual way, and crypulotions, patches, when the
From the changing wounds had existed kindly grew latter at the end of four parts time there was not a vestige of edema and it was impossible to produce pitting on the limbs or feet. As far as I know the woman is now tolerably well, the symptoms of palpitation in the case was, let me add quietly mitigated, and during the use of the medicine was not complained of at all. Side by side these two cases may illustrate the action of digitale as a diuretic for it was given in both. Without denying that peculiarity of constitution may account for difference of result after its administration, I think the must be more easily and better explained by considering not peculiarity of constitution, but a contrasted frequency of organic disease. In judging of the above symptoms will assist us, but the pulse especially as an index of the work of the heart. With that theory as to the influence of digitale which assigns to it a tonic power over the heart, I am unacquainted. The functional palpitations is superadded upon that of organic disease, it may well
be eagerly asked; is there any drug which will modify this distressing action of the heart? My personal experience on this question is silent. But an intelligent and experienced medical friend has told me that he places the highest confidence in this drug as an excellent remedy in this class of cases.

Illustrative of the Action of Alcohol

It does not require a very extensive habit of the experience, before we discover the salutary and saving influence of alcohol in the collapse which frequently follows upon delivery. Nothing looks more alarming than the corporate failure of the countenance and life—the swooning state of the system, and the almost complete suspension of the pulse. Hot bottles to the feet and warmth to the body often times succeed without other means in rallying the failing powers. But should warmth or spirituous fluids fail the administration of a little brandy will produce the desired effect. Nothing can be more effectual than to note the gradual yet sure return of pulsation to the arteries under its influence. A rapid pulse follows, which gradually falls to that of
favorable convalescence. To the inexperienced, nothing can be more alarming than this state of collapse which appears to be produced by the exhausting efforts of labor. This is a very common place illustration of the influence of an alcoholic stimulant; however, but the effect will be found, I think, of great interest.

A man prematurely old at forty years, in consequence of a life time spent in excessive physical toil, accompanied with severe mental anxiety, had suffered for some time, more particularly from a distressing epigastric pain. I have seen the fit of pain come on, and the poor man was rendered quite faint and utterly helpless. The pain was not persistent, the appetite, and generally the digestive function, were in good order; hemorrhoids were present, and with tremblingness. Although a discharge of blood from them not infrequently was the prelude to comparative comfort. Pulse was sixty eight but excessively weak through irregular. Distinct purple vessels ramified on the chest; the lips were blue; the extremities cold, and the face somewhat emaciated. The patient was excessively anxious about his
condition, and perpetually impressed with the fear of approaching death. In fact he was making preparations every day to die; calling his friends around him, and was impatient at being left for a single moment alone. On examination of the chest there was nothing abnormal beyond a very full action of the heart. The case was diagnosed as atrophy of the heart. In consequence of the full action of the heart, and its full response to the natural stimuli to construction, the blood was delayed in the spongiform channels, producing passive congestion—purple lips and cheeks, hemorrhoids, engorged veins of the lower extremities, & edema of the feet. In this state the patient continued for a long time alternately a little better and worse, always afflicted with most loving apprehension. It fell to my lot to see him at frequent intervals. A liberal diet was allowed him, with moderate dose of wine, one day or evening, I found his pulse instead of the breath through a full pulse of sixty eight, to be considerably more frequent and distinctly intermittent. The other symptoms were aggravated, and
everything indicated extreme asthenia and alarming depression.Acting on the theory of the disease already formed, and believing that we had to deal with a debilitated and dilated heart, I at once recommended a more powerful stimulant and before leaving the patient's side gave it administratively. An ounce of brandy was immediately given, and was to be repeated two or three times in the course of the day. The symptoms of the disease and the intermittent action of the pulse at once and consequent on not improvement. The regular pulse was restored in the most satisfactory way.

But on a more careful and prolonged study of the pulse, I found occasionally, though not often, one in the beats, an interposed additional, natural beat. Last account of the man informed me of his illness being much as usual, although he still continued to use the strongest stimulants he could procure.

In this case, I found that the attack of excessive pain in the epigastrium with the attendant alarming fascicules, was much benefited by friction of the sternum.
especially towards the centre of circulation.

The pain was referred as sympathetic.

An Opiate in Fever.

It requires careful observation, and the most meticulous of the
previous history of a case to be able to tell
when a narcotic may be given, not only
with safety, but with advantage in a
Case of fever. If the patient passes sleepless nights - two or three in succession -
and sleepless days, then, with a given
character of pulse, we are warranted in
giving an opiate. The following case is
a sequel illustration.

S. B., forty five years of age, a pensioner
and a hard drinker, had suffered from
interic fever for twelve days. Excessive
and diarrhoea alternated with constipation.

On the twelfth day towards evening, his
apoplexy of constipation was very visible,
his tongue was not protruded although asked to do so, his movement was accom-
panied with great tremulosity, delirium was constant and excessive.
He had frequently got up out of bed
and put on his clothes. He had not
kept for two entire nights and days. It was hardly possible to count the pulse in account of its great rapidity. It was of a soft, tremulous, uncertain, and irregular character, indicative of excessive nervous frustrations, the heart almost running as it went into one another. The case seemed almost a hopeless one, and, if any chance of life existed, it must be derived principally from the abolition of pain. Accordingly I divided a one-grain opium pill into two equal parts, directed that one of these should be given immediately, and, if no soothing effect was produced in the course of two hours, that the remaining part should be administered. It proved unnecessary to carry out the latter part of the direction, as the watchful patient, after the lapse of half an hour, found giving one half sank into a tranquil and pleasant slumber. This continued for a few hours, when he was to be disturbed for the sake of giving nourishment. That day the pulse was one hundred and thirty-two and regular. On the day following that it had fallen to one hundred and twenty,
and preserved its regular character. Had slept very well. After twenty-four hours the pulse had reached one hundred and eight, and the patient still went on improving in all symptoms as the day to day.

The character of the pulse here given is difficult to describe in language though it be; is when one felt extremely impulsive and striking, and impossible from obliteration from the observer's memory. The importance of its recognition and appreciation as a guide for treatment cannot be overestimated. It is a symptom of se, and I do not know whether it is exaggeration to say that the indication of treatment is specific. And this is said although, subsequently to our noticing and treating the symptom, the disease may manifest a fatal tendency.

End

Mark Twillicol
March 1866