

in a low, humid position, with its back six feet below the level of the ground behind. The only water drunk by the patient was deeply tainted with decayed vegetable matter, to which a long season of drought had, for some weeks, restricted the few inhabitants of the locality. Notwithstanding the violence of the symptoms, the exhibition of arsenic exerted an immediate and beneficial effect on the disease; and ninety-six drops restored the patient to convalescence. Slight consecutive fever followed, which, however, quickly yielded to the remedies employed; and, in a week after the commencement of the attack, the patient returned to his usual employment.

**CASE III.** H. D., aged 40, of square build and strong constitution, by trade a shoemaker, was seized with vomiting and purging at six o'clock, A.M., on October 25th. These symptoms continued to increase till evening, when I saw him about five o'clock. There were then great coldness of skin, shrunken features, quick small feeble pulse, altered voice, and violent pains in the bowels; but no cramps of the extremities. He had been purged eighteen times, and had vomited twelve times. During the intervals of vomiting, there was frequent and violent retching. The dejections were copious, watery, frothy, and but slightly coloured. Their odour was so offensive as to render the patient's apartment almost intolerable. The urine was diminished in quantity, and passed at long intervals. I ordered three drops of liquor arsenicalis every half hour; also cold water to drink, and artificial warmth to the body.

7 P.M. He had not vomited, or been purged, since taking the first dose of medicine; and felt better.

10 P.M. He had no sickness or vomiting; the skin was becoming warm; the pulse was more distinct; he complained of thirst. He had not passed urine since midday.

October 26th. 9 A.M. He was purged once at twelve o'clock on the previous night, and again at six this morning. The evacuations were said to be less offensive. He had no sickness during the night; the expression of the countenance was improved; the bowels were easy; the skin was warm and perspiring; the pulse was stronger, 96 per minute; he had passed about two ounces of urine during the night.

Henceforth, the case rapidly improved; and, on the 28th, convalescence was established; the patient having taken, in all, seventy-two drops of the arsenical solution.

**REMARKS.** This case was rapidly passing into complete collapse at the time I first saw it. Nevertheless, the exhibition of arsenic was attended by immediately good results, namely, the instant arrest of vomiting, and the diminution in the frequency of the alvine discharges. The peculiarly offensive and sickly nature of these discharges indicated very strongly the existence of a blood-poison, which was probably in this case also owing to the locality in which the patient lived. The house was small, dark, badly ventilated, two feet below the level of the adjoining street, the surface of which was extremely filthy, and the drainage, through which flowed the contents of drains from a higher part of the town, bad. The immediate and rapid improvement which followed the exhibition of arsenic, may fairly be ascribed to the influence of that remedy, since no other part of the treatment was calculated to effect so sudden a change; nor was the course of the disease at all tending towards an improvement.

**CASE IV.** L. S., aged 32, of spare and delicate habit of body, by trade a blacksmith, was seized, at 2 A.M., on Oct. 27th, with vomiting and purging. These symptoms continued to increase during the day, and at five o'clock P.M. I saw him. The countenance was pale, haggard, and shrunken; skin cold; breath cold; voice reduced to a whisper; pulse small, quick, and extremely feeble; violent cramps in the abdomen and calves of the legs; partial suppression of urine. Could not say how often he had vomited and purged during the day; but the dejections had been almost incessant. The discharges were copious, thin, frothy, almost colourless, and of extremely sickly and offensive odour. The vomits were copious, thin, and like slightly discoloured water. I ordered him to take three drops of liquor arse-

nicalis every half-hour; also to drink cold water, and have artificial warmth applied to the body.

7 P.M. He had been purged and had vomited immediately after taking the first dose of the medicine. A second dose, given very shortly afterwards, was retained. The other symptoms remained the same.

10 P.M. The vomiting and purging were abated; he had no cramps; the skin was becoming warmer; the pulse was 110, more distinct, but feeble; the tongue was fiery red along the centre of the dorsum, and covered with a slight white fur at the sides; he had considerable thirst.

Oct. 28th. 9 A.M. He was purged at two, five, and seven, A.M. The motions were less offensive; he had no sickness; the skin was warm and slightly perspiring; he had slight occasional nipping pains in the abdomen and legs; the expression of his countenance was more natural; the voice was much improved; the pulse was soft, regular, equal, 96 per minute. He had passed three ounces of urine during the night.

5 P.M. He had had neither sickness nor vomiting since last visit. In all respects he was considerably improved. He was ordered to take the liquor arsenicalis every two hours.

Henceforth the case progressed favourably; and, on the 30th instant, perfect convalescence was established.

**REMARKS.** The above case must be regarded as one of the worst attacks of English cholera, and yet a single dose of the arsenic was sufficient to permanently arrest the vomiting; whilst a few more doses completely checked the purging. The discharges here, as in the previous case, were peculiarly offensive; whilst the condition of the patient, as to house, ventilation, and drainage, was likewise very similar. Thus, the house in which the patient lived is from one to two feet, at its ground-floor, below the level of the adjoining alley; it is situated about ten yards from the church-yard, and small; the rooms are low, and the drainage and ventilation bad. Several open sewers exist within a short distance of the house, and from these noxious emanations constantly arise. These circumstances, and the peculiar odour of the alvine discharges, showed the probable dependence of the disease on the presence of a poison in the blood; whilst the result of the treatment demonstrates the efficiency of arsenic in destroying the power of such poison.

Chesterfield, Nov. 4th, 1854.

### CASE OF STRANGULATED HERNIA,

IN WHICH THE INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION CONTINUED FIVE DAYS AFTER OPERATION.

By GEORGE MALLETT, Esq.

Two cases of intestinal obstruction have recently been made public in this JOURNAL. In one, the propriety of using the knife for its relief was advocated and employed; in the other, very powerful purgatives. I am of opinion that the old and often repeated quotation is true in such cases, and indeed in most others—"in medio tutissimus ibis"; of the truth of which remark the following case is, I think, an illustration.

**CASE.** Oct. 13th. I was requested by Mr. Bancroft to visit a patient, upon whom he had been in attendance for a few days. Upon inquiry, I found the patient was a man about sixty-five years old; and that the bowels had not been moved for three or four days. There was also constant vomiting. Aperient medicine had been given, and injections administered, without effect. The abdomen being examined, a large umbilical hernia was discovered, evidently omental, and probably irreducible, as it had not been returned for several years; but it had hitherto caused no inconvenience. Mr. Bancroft had previously tried to reduce it by the taxis, but without effect. The tumour was tense, painful upon pressure, and the surrounding parts tender. The tongue was foul, but not dry; pulse 80. I made slight pressure upon the hernia; but, as the patient complained of much increased pain in consequence, the attempt at

reduction was discontinued. As the symptoms were not very urgent, and as it was doubtful whether the obstruction was caused by strangulated intestine, we resolved to wait until morning. Two grains of calomel and one and a half of opium were ordered to be given every three hours, and cold applications to be constantly applied during the night.

Oct. 14th. There was no evacuation. The other symptoms were the same, the tumour only being rather more tender. It was then decided to cut down to the ring, and, if necessary, to enlarge it. In a minute, I was enabled to place my finger in the ring, which very tightly embraced an omental protrusion. The stricture was divided; and immediately, from under the omental mass, was heard a gurgling sound, as if intestine was slipping back into the abdominal cavity. Upon examining the sac, it was found to contain nothing but omentum, which had formed extensive and firm adhesion, and could not be returned. The patient expressed himself much relieved; and in the evening, although the bowels had not been moved, all pain and tenderness had disappeared.

Oct. 15th. There had been no evacuation, but still no pain. Calomel and small doses of opium every three hours, and frequent injections, were given.

Oct. 16th. No evacuation of the bowels had occurred; but the vomiting, which had abated after the operation, now returned with great violence. The injections were directed to be continued; and one drop of croton oil with three grains of jalap, in the form of a pill, was given every three or four hours.

Oct. 17th. There was no improvement; everything, both food and medicine, was rejected. Not seeing much advantage in such a case from medicine, and fearing to excite inflammation by persisting in the use of strong purgatives, we determined in some degree to leave the case to nature, and merely ordered an occasional injection, and a drachm of sulphate of magnesia in infusion of roses three times a day.

Oct. 18th. There was no change.

Oct. 19th. At 9 A.M. the bowels were freely moved; and during the day he had several other motions.

Oct. 20th. The patient was improving; but, sickness still continuing, a saline effervescing mixture was given.

From this period to the 29th, he slowly improved; and, on that day, we found our patient down stairs, with a clean tongue, open bowels, and a moderately good appetite.

**REMARKS.** The above appears to be an interesting case. The result proved the propriety of the operation; but, even if no strictured intestine had been found, I think, under such circumstances, the operation would have been justifiable. The obstruction was no doubt originally caused by a small portion of the intestine becoming strangulated in the sac; but why it continued so long afterwards, I have only probability to offer: therefore I will only further say that the termination gives us a useful lesson not to despair, and also proves that the *vis medicatrix nature* is very powerful, when medical agents have proved powerless.

Bolton, Oct. 30, 1854.

### CASE OF INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY THE PASSAGE OF AN ELASTIC TUBE.

By H. G. TREND, Esq.

HAVING lately seen reported in the *JOURNAL* cases of intestinal obstruction, I have been induced to send you the following, thinking it may prove interesting, as showing a different mode of treatment, and a highly satisfactory result.

**CASE.** On the evening of the 10th of July last, I was requested to see Mr. H. G., aged 65, a gentleman well known in this locality by the performance of the feat of walking a thousand miles in a thousand hours, and for his large collection of curiosities and relics. I found him sitting up in bed, complaining of severe nipping pains in

the bowels. His countenance betokened no great anxiety. The skin was cool and comfortable; the pulse but slightly accelerated, and of good volume. The abdomen was not much distended. On inquiry, I found that he had been subject to frequent attacks of a similar kind, sometimes of a very alarming nature, for some years past. He is of regular and temperate habits. The bowels had not been relieved for forty-eight hours; but that, he informed me, was no unusual occurrence. I ordered him a warm aperient; to be repeated, if necessary.

July 11th. 9 A.M. The bowels had not been relieved. In other respects, he seemed much the same. There was no protrusion of the bowel anywhere. He was ordered to have the aperient repeated.

2 P.M. The bowels had not been moved. He was ordered to take one drop of croton oil with five grains of compound extract of colocynth, every two hours, till the bowels should be relieved.

10 P.M. He had now taken four of the pills, but no effect had been produced. The pain seemed more severe, and the abdomen was decidedly larger. The pain came on in paroxysms, lasting about a quarter of an hour. The pulse seemed unaffected. He was ordered to have a castor oil enema; and to have the abdomen well fomented with flannels wrung out of hot water; and to repeat the pills every three hours.

July 12th. 10 A.M. He had passed a bad night, having had five very severe paroxysms of pain. The enema brought away nothing. The abdomen was very much distended and tympanitic. The skin was cool. The pulse was but slightly quickened. The urine was thick and high coloured. He having taken eight of the pills, I requested my predecessor, Mr. Trowell, to see him. After consultation, the pills were ordered to be repeated every four hours, and an opiate embrocation to be applied to the abdomen.

9 P.M. He was evidently worse. The pains much resembled those of a woman in labour. He lay upon his back, with his knees drawn up towards his abdomen. His countenance was expressive of great anxiety and distress. There had been no action of the bowels.

July 13th. 9 A.M. He had passed a wretched night. The nurse told me that he had several times got out of bed, and clung to the post, in the greatest agony. There was no movement of the bowels. The pain was most distressing. The countenance was anxious; the skin was dry; the pulse but slightly accelerated. The abdomen was large and tympanitic, but not painful on pressure. He had vomited once. There was hiccup, and the feet were cold. I ordered him to have bottles of hot water applied to the feet; to continue the embrocation; and to have some effervescing medicine.

7 P.M. He had been worse all day. The hiccup had considerably increased. He had vomited once since the morning, but retained the medicine. His pain was very violent. He had altogether taken eleven drops of croton oil, besides other strong aperient medicine. I ordered a pill, with two grains of opium.

11 P.M. The pain seemed worse. He was directed to take one grain of opium every three hours, if necessary.

July 14th. He had had another wretched night. Dr. Paley, of Peterborough, saw him with me this morning. He was then much worse. The tongue was furred; the pulse but slightly accelerated; the urine was scanty and high coloured. The pain was excessive; no posture seeming to afford relief. The abdomen was large, and like a drum. He had hiccup every five or ten minutes. He vomited twice during the night. After consultation, it was determined to pass up, if possible, a long elastic tube: that of a stomach-pump was used. After having passed it about fourteen or sixteen inches, large quantities of warm water were injected; but no relief was experienced, the water returning almost as clear as when thrown up. After half an hour's trial to pass it higher up, it was laid aside; and he was ordered one grain of opium every two hours, and to continue the embrocation.

9 P.M. The pain had slightly abated. He had taken