

for. Of these there is none more sure and efficacious, than the *hydrarg. cum creta*. Two grains of this every night, or every second night, for a child of two years old, and a drop, or two drops, of the tincture of digitalis, three times a day, gradually increased to three or four, will, in general, be found sufficient to produce a marked good effect in the condition of the patient. When an aperient is required, the following will be found of service:—

℞ Tinct. rhei. gutt. xx., Potassæ tartratis 5ss, Aquæ anethi 5ss, Misce. Fat haustus, mane sumendus; or the powder called by the late Sir William Fordyce, his "*Pulvis Antihecticus et Antirachiticus Infantum*," famed, as he says, "for curing, as if by miracle, the hectic fever and swelled bellies of children." ℞ Sal. polychrest gr. x. Pulv. rad. rhubarb. gran. iij., iv., v., vj., vel. vii.; Misce pro una dosi, omni mane sumend per 14 dies, vel donec cesserit Febris Hectica, aut tumor abdominis.

If it were necessary to record cases, I might fill pages with their recital, but I shall be satisfied if the general fact is received of the efficacy of digitalis in lymphatic disease, with, or without, the other articles mentioned, as there may be evidence of liver complaint, as well as affection of some other portions of the secretory organs.

But it is a gradual steady influence which I desire to establish in the cases for which I prescribe it, and in these gradually increased doses, it would seem to produce the desired effects on the lymphatic and arterial systems—to depress the one and excite the other.

It may be occasionally combined with opium, as in this formula:

℞ Digitalis pulv. gr. ij., Calomel. Opii. pulv. aa. gr. j., Misce. et divide in chart. viij. quarum j. nocte manequè dand.; or the medicine may be given without the calomel, occasional doses of the *hydrarg. cum creta* being substituted for it, and an aperient exhibited according to circumstances.

I am well aware that the administration of opium to children requires much caution and prudence, but am equally certain that these being employed, it will often, by arresting irritation, prove essentially serviceable. In proof of this I take leave to quote the opinion of my late esteemed friend Dr. John Armstrong, as given in his admirable lectures, page 374.

"Sometimes," he says, "in children there is a state of extreme general irritation. The arms are tossed about, the breathing is rapid, the pulse small, weak and thready, and the countenance anxious. In this state I have found great benefit from a twelfth part of a grain of opium, or one grain of compound powder of *Ipecacuanha*, or two drops (and in very young children, one drop) of tincture of opium, or two, three, or four drops of tincture of henbane. It is astonishing how these anodynes relieve irritation. Many children would die but for the exhibition of opium, the effect of which is, that the child falls into

a tranquil sleep, from which it awakens with a pulse reduced in frequency, and sometimes with a desire of food."

Thus far the gifted Armstrong, than whom a more judicious and accurate observer never entered a sick room, and I am sure, that many of my senior brethren will bear testimony to the correctness of his judgment from cases in their own practice.

Against recording such, I have already stated my objection, but there is a very marked one which flashes at the moment on my memory, and of which I am tempted to give a brief sketch.

I was called, many years since, in consultation to an infant supposed to be dying. On arriving at the house of my patient, the place was, as usual in such circumstances, filled with people, and grief and consternation were depicted on every countenance. I cleared the room, *instantly*, of the weepers and wailers, wringers of hands and eager expectants of a death scene, and then proceeded calmly to inquire of the attendant practitioner, a very young man, the particulars of the case. The child was screaming itself into convulsions with agony, and with its knees drawn up to the abdomen, its thumbs clenched in the palms of the hands—was evidently suffering from severe tormina, and intestinal irritation. I soon learned from my colleague, that the little sufferer had been subjected for some days to a routine, *secundem artem*, course of drastics for worms, with which it was supposed to be infested. Hinting at the necessity of endeavouring to sooth the existing irritation and pain, I quietly suggested the exhibition of one grain doses of Dover's Powder every three hours, with warm poppy fomentations to the abdomen, and took my leave.

On calling next morning, I found, that after the first powder had been given, the child ceased to cry, and on the exhibition of the second fell into a deep sleep, from which it was not then awake. It awoke soon after, and a little arrow-root, with an occasional dose of castor oil to keep the bowels free, completed the cure. Now, there was nothing of magic in this; nothing new or wonderful in practice. Calomel and Scammony, in large and repeated doses, had done their worst, and the timely administration of a little opium, with a soothing diet, sufficed to remedy the evil they had produced.

Still, I repeat, that we must be extremely cautious in exhibiting this powerful drug to children, as its miserable, and too frequently fatal effects, in "*nursery practice*," sufficiently testify. We should, in fact, always bear in mind the excellent sentence of Wedel—"Sacra vitæ anchora est opium, bene, et circumspecte agentibus; cymba autem Charonis in manu imperiti, et seu gladium in manu furiosi." But to return from this long digression.