

18.—This is a case of recovery after taking, as was supposed,  $\frac{5}{8}$  oz. of laudanum. The patient said he had taken it about eleven o'clock at night, and he was not seen till 10 a.m., next day. At that hour he stabbed himself in the side with a penknife, in the left side of the thorax; he appeared heavy, and said he had had no sleep after taking the laudanum, but except the drowsiness and a contracted pupil, had no symptom of narcotism. The stomach pump brought away fluid having the smell of laudanum. Coffee was administered, &c.; he recovered perfectly from the effects of the narcotic in the course of a few days.

"This case is chiefly remarkable from the large dose of tinct. of opium alleged to have been swallowed. The largest quantity, from the effect of which an individual has been known to recover was *four ounces*."

The fact, that in this case, *five ounces* were swallowed "rests upon the man's own statement \* \* \* The almost entire absence of narcotic symptoms, can only be explained by supposing, as in other cases of recovery from very large doses, that the man must have vomited freely after having taken the tincture.

"It is difficult to account for the slight symptoms and ultimate recovery except by supposing either that the whole of the poison was swallowed and the great part speedily ejected, or that only a small quantity had been taken, by the patient shortly before he was seen by Mr. Alkwork."

[I confess I entertain great doubts as to this case—it seems almost incredible that such a quantity of laudanum should remain in the stomach for *eleven* hours without producing some decided symptoms of narcotism; and nothing is said of vomiting having occurred in that interval. At the same time a case which occurred to me many years ago might lead to the idea that this was not absolutely impossible.

I was called about seven or eight o'clock, a.m., to a negro lad, who had taken about ten drachms of laudanum, at ten or eleven o'clock the night before. He was then somnolent but could be roused, and acknowledged what he had taken. Some sulphate of zinc, and other usual modes of treatment restored him to health. He said he had felt *no effect* from the laudanum all night, nor until he began to move about six o'clock in the morning, when—as far as I recollect, he took some coffee, and immediately afterwards, he felt drowsy.—His own explanation was that *he had not begun to digest it* until he began to move about. I regret that I cannot at present find the notes of this case so as to give it more in detail—but it substantiates the fact that *laudanum may lie in the stomach many hours before producing any effect whatever*.

Another case bearing on the subject has been related to me by a highly esteemed and intelligent friend, Doctor McNaught, formerly of Jamaica. A gentleman whom I knew many years ago, took one morning early, half a drachm of sulphate of morphia, and lay quiet for two hours; he then got up, feeling no effect from it, shaved himself and took some coffee; shortly afterwards he seems to have repented or become frightened at what he had done, and sent for a medical friend, but it was too late; he expired in four hours after taking the dose. Here we have an interval of two hours without any effect whatever from an enormous dose of morphia; apparently, in short, until the absorbents were set in action, in consequence of the bodily exertion and drinking the coffee—the poisonous effects were speedily developed.]

We are compelled to defer the remainder of this important abstract till our next number.