

*Use of the Essential Oil of Turpentine and Opium in Large Doses in the Treatment of Severe Puerperal Affections.*

IN the discussion going on for the last three months at the Academy of Medicine in Paris, and which has attracted so much public attention, puerperal fever has been considered by the most competent authorities as a disease almost universally beyond the resource of art, at least in the present state of our knowledge; all the means hitherto employed have, almost without exception, proved useless. This melancholy confession of the inefficacy of medicine to subdue an affection which carries off so many women in the flower of their age, is unfortunately but too well founded when we speak of the severe epidemic form, but ought not, however, to be adopted as literally true. We have lately seen a case of very severe puerperal peritonitis, which M. Antoine has cured by the method above mentioned, and which Velpeau introduced many years ago. We have since seen two cases in Velpeau's wards, both cured in the same way. This plan of treatment is by no means new, for we remember to have used it with success some twenty years ago, but is not the less worthy of notice. It is the plan of Graves (of Dublin) which Trousseau has long employed with advantage in the treatment of puerperal illnesses: it consists in giving to lying in women attacked with metro-ovariitis, or phlegmonous inflammation of the broad ligaments, or peritonitis, or uterine phlebitis, &c., &c., opium and essential oil of turpentine in large doses.

Dr. Bonfils has just published, *in extenso*, in the "Bulletin Therapeutique," two very interesting cases of this kind. In the first the patient was attacked after her confinement with peritonitis and double pleuro-pneumonia, and was cured of this formidable complication after seven weeks' treatment. The other patient was attacked under similar circumstances, with a very severe general peritonitis, all the puerperal complications were rapidly checked by the plan of treatment recommended, but after the most marked improvement, which promised to end in a perfect recovery, she was seized with symptoms of hectic, which closely resembled that of pulmonary phthisis, and she finally sunk, owing, in all probability, to a purulent infection.

Opium and turpentine were administered in both cases in the following manner:—

In the first case Trousseau prescribed opium in pills, and turpentine in enemata; he gave at first 5 centigrammes of opium, in five pills, in the day; then the dose was raised to 8 centigrammes, in eight pills; then 10 centigrammes, in ten pills. The opium was continued for thirteen days.