

individual was found *totally insensible*, fifteen minutes after the poison had been taken." Such was the state of my patient on my arrival, and no attempt at treatment of any sort had been resorted to by those whom the report of the event had attracted to the spot. I had brought a drachm of sulphate of zinc with me, and directing that he should be immediately raised and held in the upright posture by two men, I contrived to give him half of it in a little tepid water, which was a matter of no small difficulty, from the almost totally suspended power of deglutition. He was then dragged round the room, more like a corpse than a living being, and fortunately abundance of help was at hand for this purpose, as it required almost Herculean strength to support his weight, his form being very muscular, and his height upwards of six feet. Fifteen or twenty minutes had elapsed, and no effect was produced by the zinc; the other half was therefore given, the stomach pump being rendered useless from the accidental loss at the moment of a very important part of the tube. I was, therefore, obliged to proceed with such means as were at hand, but as no effort at vomiting was yet manifested, I began to think that it would be almost impossible to supply the want of an apparatus so essential in cases of this description. Draughts of warm water were poured down from time to time; constant motion kept up in the manner already described; and at length I had the gratification of seeing a copious ejection from the stomach of a dark coloured fluid. The effect of this was very marked, for consciousness now began, in some measure, to return, and warm water could be swallowed without much difficulty. After each act of vomiting, sensibility seemed to increase; articulation was partially restored; and he was now apparently aware that he was under medical treatment; for, opening his eyes (which he had great difficulty in doing), he implored me to allow him to lie down, even if only for a few minutes. The desire for sleep was most pressing, and resistance to it was evidently extremely painful to him. He continued occasionally to entreat for permission to rest, but as yet, this would have been manifestly improper; and the absolute necessity, therefore, of continuing in motion having been impressed upon him, his supporters renewed their trying office with unwearied assiduity. Whether occasioned by the narcotic, or whether from the acrid effect of the zinc, I was unable to determine, but at this time thirst was much complained of, and he begged that cold water might be substituted for the strong coffee which had latterly been very plentifully supplied. To this request I readily yielded, and I fear that I should be thought desirous of imposing upon your credulity, were I to state the aggregate quantity of his potations within the

short space of one hour. From this period he rapidly improved, walking with but little support, and at length, about day light, he was permitted to lie down, and indulge the now much diminished desire for repose. At seven o'clock in the morning, he was in a tranquil slumber, from which he was easily aroused, and in reply to my inquiry, expressed himself free from uneasiness, except perhaps a slight degree of headache. A light breakfast was recommended, with a small quantity of brandy and water, to be taken immediately afterwards, and some gently aperient medicine in the course of the morning. No interruption to convalescence subsequently occurred.

I will only detain you with one or two observations in conclusion.

1, However alike the symptoms of poisoning by opium may generally be, there are undoubtedly cases where dissimilarity is to be found. In my own practice I have remarked this, and I doubt not that you have noticed the same fact also. In the experience of the writer to whom I have referred, diarrhæa and colic, accompanied with severe pain, were present in some, while diuresis, with convulsion and delirium, occurred in others. The pulse, breathing, and appearance likewise vary materially. And,

2, As in the symptoms, so also in the progress of these cases, does a difference exist, for in one which he relates in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*; "about half an ounce of laudanum was taken, and considerably more than an hour afterwards (during which time the patient slept), he arose spontaneously from bed and procured a drink for himself: about ten hours afterwards he died, with all the symptoms of narcotic poisoning." In another case, "where the dose was *small*, but also *fatal*, the individual answered some questions readily and cheerfully, two or three hours after swallowing the poison." A great difference, too, is observed in the quantity which produces a fatal effect. Four grains are stated by Dr. Paris to have occasioned death in an adult, and a case is related by Dr. Christison, in which the same event occurred from the administration of four grains and a half of opium, with nine of camphor.

3, With respect to the treatment which was pursued, if it should be regarded as an omission that acidulated drinks were not freely administered, the best explanation which can be offered is grounded on the objection entertained to the only one which was believed to be at hand, namely, vinegar and water; and, however unfounded such an objection may be considered, I could not divest myself of the idea, that it is in itself possessed of qualities which are calculated—if not to promote absorption—to add, at least in some degree, to the nar-