

artery, and so terminate my patient's sufferings with as much expedition as could be consistent with perfect safety

As Dr. Hunter judiciously and humanely published his cases with a view to prevent patients being unnecessarily exposed to a severe operation, so I think it incumbent on me to state the above, as a caution to inexperienced practitioners, whenever they meet with such appearances as the Doctor has described, but in a less degree, to be well assured that the veins will really dilate sufficiently to take off the whole of the blood poured out by the artery, before they give such a prognostic as may lull the patient into a delusive and dangerous security.

IX. *An Account of the good Effects of Opium, administered in Clysters, in Cases of Menorrhagia. By Mr. Peter Copland, Surgeon at Swayfield, near Colsterworth, in Lincolnshire.*

CASE I.

A woman at Colsterworth aged thirty-two years, and who had had four children, was at-

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tacked on the third of August, 1787, with a discharge of blood from the uterus, accompanied with pains in the loins and lower part of the abdomen. From the disappearance of the menses she supposed herself in the third month of pregnancy; and her midwife, who was sent for, concluded from some substances expelled with the discharge, that abortion had taken place: but the hæmorrhage not ceasing, I was called to her assistance the next day. From this time till the eighth of November, bleeding, nitre, acids, alum, bark, and opiates, were used by turns, or conjointly, as circumstances seemed to indicate; but with temporary relief only, the pain and hæmorrhage always returning, and, at times, hardly yielding to the means employed.

The patient was now much reduced; and, as I suspected that there was a local disease of the uterus, I was apprehensive that the case would terminate unfavourably. It, however, at this time occurred to me that Dr. Whytt, in his Observations on Nervous Disorders, had noticed the subject of uterine hæmorrhages; and accordingly, on consulting that work, I found the following remark: “When a pro-

“ tion, is attended with, or preceded by, an acute
 “ pain, not inflammatory, in the lower part of
 “ the back or belly, and returns with greater
 “ violence; as often as the pain returns or in-
 “ creases, opium will prove a more effectual
 “ remedy than any of the astringents.”—I there-
 fore, in imitation of the treatment used in the
 case there described *, directed that fifty drops
 of tincture of opium should be mixed with a
 large tea cupful of cold water, and adminis-
 tered every night as a clyster; and that costive-
 ness should be obviated by the occasional use
 of laxative clysters. The reduced state of the
 patient, from the long continuance of the hæ-
 morrhage, induced me to continue the use of
 astringents also in the day time.

From the first employment of the anodyne
 clyster she experienced much relief. It was
 repeated at first every night, then every se-
 cond night, and afterwards occasionally till the
 twenty-seventh of November, when she was
 quite well.

Being much struck with the alteration that
 succeeded the administration of the anodyne
 clyster in this case, I determined to give it a

* See the edition of his works, in 4to. p. 661.

further

further trial on future occasions. The following cases have since occurred.—I shall relate them from the notes I took of each.

CASE II.

A woman at Castle-Bytherm, aged forty-four years, was attacked on the thirtieth of September, 1791, with a diarrhœa, unaccompanied with tenesmus; soon after which the menstrual discharge took place (a fortnight only after its last appearance) with pain, returning at intervals, and extending from the upper part of the right groin across the abdomen, and sometimes across the loins. These symptoms continued on the fourth of October, when I first saw her. Her pulse was then small and quick. A solution of magnesia vitriolata in water was directed to be taken immediately, and an anodyne astringent draught after sufficient evacuations.

5th. She had several evacuations yesterday, and a good night; but two loose stools this morning.—An astringent mixture, with tincture of opium, was directed to be taken at intervals.

6th.

6th. The purging ceased yesterday ; but the uterus, with the pain of the abdomen, still continued unabated. Sixty drops of tincture of opium in five ounces of water were directed to be injected *per anum*.

7th. The discharge was lessened, but the pain continued in a considerable degree. As she had had no stool since the 5th in the morning, a rhubarb bolus was ordered to be taken immediately. This produced an evacuation, and the clyster with opium was then repeated. A piece of folded linen, wetted with tincture of opium, was applied to the right groin* after the administration of the clyster.

11th. The pain ceased, and the discharge disappeared after the last clyster ; but the purging having returned, recourse was again had to the astringent mixture. I did not see her again till the first of November following, when she informed me that the purging stopped after the repetition of the mixture, and that she had continued well ever since.

* Upon examination no appearance of rupture could be discovered.

CASE III.

In my way through Creeton, on the nineteenth of October, 1791, I was desired to see a woman aged forty-two years, the mother of several children, who had miscarried after having gone above half her time, on the eleventh instant. From that day she had had a coloured discharge, in more or less degree, from the uterus, till a few hours before I saw her, when she had been seized with a shivering, followed by periodic pains in the loins and abdomen, and an alarming increase of the discharge, with frequent faintings.

I found her on the bed with her cloaths on, and her face beset with cold sweat. Upon taking hold of her arm, with the intention of examining the state of her pulse, it felt cold and moistened my fingers with its sweat, which she said extended to every part of her; and she repeatedly complained that her feet were very cold. Her pulse was small and irregular, beating one hundred and thirty times in a minute, and disappearing upon the least pressure from my fingers. A clyster, composed of seventy drops of tinc-

tincture of opium, and a large tea cupful of water, was immediately injected. She was desired not to undergo the fatigue of undressing but to remain upon the bed, to take strong broth cool frequently, and occasionally small quantities of red wine mixed with water, if the discharge would permit. The room was directed to be kept well aired and cool, and cloths were introduced within the os externum, with a view to impede the discharge.

20th. The pains had diminished after the introduction of the clyster: she had got some sleep during the night, and the discharge had been inconsiderable. The universal cold sweat was still present, and vomiting took place this morning. Her pulse was nearly the same as yesterday. The clyster with opium was directed to be repeated in the evening, or at any time in the day, should the pain or discharge require it. Four table spoonfuls of a mixture composed of a pint of decoction of Peruvian bark, and two drachms of acid elixir of vitriol, were ordered to be taken every three hours.

21st. The clyster had been administered yesterday evening; she had had a good night, and the sweating and discharge had disappeared. She retched once this morning. The exertion this
occasioned

occasioned forced out a large coagulum of blood with the cloths from the vagina. Her pulse was 110, regular, and less feeble. No motion having taken place since the 19th, a laxative clyster was directed to be now employed; the use of the mixture was continued; and the clyster with opium was repeated in the evening.

The laxative clyster yesterday produced a slight evacuation of fæces. She had now no pain or discharge, and her pulse was at 100. The clyster with opium was not repeated after this; but she occasionally had recourse to the laxative clyster, and persevered in the use of the mixture till the tenth of November, at which time she had regained her usual health.

The preceding cases to me afford a strong proof of the justness of Dr. Whytt's observation; and, as I apprehend that it has not been sufficiently attended to, I am desirous of offering them to the medical reader, with the view of rendering the practice as general as its importance seems to deserve.

Swayfield,

October 16, 1792.