

the catgut in two other instances of stricture of the urethra from venereal causes.

Sunderland,
September 25th, 1788.

IV. *Case of a suppression of urine, which terminated fatally; with an account of the appearances on dissection. Communicated in a letter to Dr. Simmons, by Mr. James Stevenson, Surgeon, at Egham, in Surry.*

MR. Stephen Boulton, coach-maker, at Staines, in Middlesex, aged sixty-three years, and of a robust habit of body, was seized on Friday, November the 25th, 1785, with violent forcing pains at the bottom of his belly, and an incessant desire to make water, tho' unable to void a single drop. These symptoms were accompanied with a hard throbbing pulse, beating an hundred and twenty strokes in a minute, and with great tension over the whole abdomen.

He was extremely thirsty, and his tongue was very dry; he complained also of sickness, but did not vomit.

After taking away twenty-four ounces of blood, an oily emollient clyster was directed to be administered every four hours, and four table spoonfuls of a purgative mixture composed of soluble tartar, manna, and infusion of fena, to be taken every two hours; recourse was likewise had to warm bathing.

On the morning of the 26th his pain was somewhat diminished, altho' he had had no stool nor any discharge of urine. The catheter was now introduced, but without effect, the bladder seeming to be quite flaccid.

His pulse being still very strong, twelve ounces more of blood were directed to be taken away, and the purging medicine, clysters, and warm bath, were repeated.

Dr. Lind, physician at Windsor, who visited the patient this day, in the evening, recommended a perseverance in the plan already adopted, with the addition only of half a drachm of diuretic salt, to be given every six hours in four table spoonfuls of a common saline mixture.

On the 27th his pulse was at ninety, and he had had two stools, but had made no water; the catheter was therefore again introduced, but with no better success than before.

On the 28th the heat of his skin was much increased, and his pulse fluctuated between an hundred and an hundred and twenty strokes in a minute. In consequence of his walking on the cold floor, about an ounce of urine, of a natural colour, was discharged drop by drop. During this and the preceding day the purgative and diuretic medicines were continued, with the occasional use of oily clysters and the warm bath; and in the evening, as the pain in the lower part of the belly was much increased, six leeches were applied, which bled profusely.

On the 29th the pain was much relieved. He had had three purgative stools, and a little urine had drivelled on the sheets; but still the tension of the belly continued.

On the 30th he had nine stools of a dark colour, but voided no urine. His belly was now painful to the touch; his pulse was much increased in quickness, and he was slightly delirious.

December 1st, he had dosed a little in the night, but he now voided his stools involuntarily, and
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was seized with subfultus tendinum, hiccough and delirium. In this state he continued till his death, which happened on the 4th of December, in the morning.

The body was opened about eight hours after death. The intestines were found perfectly free of disease, excepting one blue spot with a deep red tinge on the curvature of the duodenum. The state of the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and all the parts contiguous, was very particularly attended to; but not the least appearance of disease could be discovered. To our great surprize, however, more than a pint of pale, inodorous urine was found in the bladder, which appeared to have been very recently secreted from the kidneys; the catheter having been introduced the night before the patient's death, without the desired effect.

The stomach was next examined.—The mucus on many parts of it was intirely gone, many spots were observed of a deep red, inclining to a blue colour, and the tip of the finger made holes through its substance with gentle pressure.

The gall-bladder and ducts had a natural appearance, and altho' two stones of a large size were found in the former, there was not the smallest inflammation perceptible on either of these

these parts. From all these circumstances, therefore, we concluded, that the original symptoms of Mr. Boulton's disease could not be attributed to any other cause than the local affection of the stomach.

During the progress of this illness, the cause was considered as obscure, but it was agreed by all, that the antiphlogistic plan ought to be pursued, and so it was, very steadily, until symptoms of debility made it manifestly improper.

In short, this disease put on such appearances as left us quite in the dark as to the primary mischief. It militated with the characters commonly laid down of a local affection of the stomach, kidneys, or their appendages.

The true cause could only, I presume, be discovered by the inspection of the body after death, and it most obviously is proved, that it was an idiopathic inflammation of the stomach.

It turned out upon more enquiry that the patient had drank a glass of a very acrid composition * the morning he was taken ill; and it is scarcely to be doubted that this was actually

* This mixture was composed of horseradish, mustard seed, garlic, rue, marshmallow, pimpernel, aniseed, and rhubarb, distilled twice in brandy. I was not able to ascertain the quantities of the several ingredients; but in the distilled liquor

actually the immediate cause of his death. If this conjecture is well founded, I presume the case will be allowed to differ in some of its circumstances from any upon record, as the inability to make water was immediate and permanent. Is it not probable, that the excretory ducts of the kidneys suffered a sympathetic constriction from the stimulus applied to the stomach?---Is it not likewise remarkable, that the patient should never have complained of any pointed, acute pain in the region of the stomach; and that he had no vomiting of the ingesta?---It is true he complained of sickness, yet never vomited; and the pain was confined to the hypogastric region, and chiefly to the part just above the pubis.—I never heard of similar effects from any fatal poison, whose operation was immediately upon the coats of the stomach, without its producing acute local pain, and violent retching, a burning heat in the epigastrium, a rejection of the ingesta, and quor, which was so uncommonly acrid and pungent that I should have thought it hardly possible for any person to swallow an ounce of it, the taste of the horseradish was extremely predominant. This poor man, who often tried his skill upon others to cure the evil, rheumatism, and other diseases, had distilled between thirty and forty gallons of this liquor, for the purpose of curing his friends, but fortunately for them took the first fatal dose himself, for a rheumatic complaint, to which he had been frequently subject.

commonly, I believe, hiccough. All these symptoms this patient was free from, and yet manifest inflammation, in an extensive degree, was evident upon inspection of the body.

Laurel water, as is well known, destroys animals, but without producing any evident local mischief in the stomach, its operation seeming to be entirely on the nervous system. The Fox Glove seems to have a power of the same kind, and so perhaps have many other vegetable poisons; but I am acquainted with none whose effects exactly resemble those of the composition which proved fatal in the present instance.

Altho' I had no doubt, after the discovery of this poison, that it had been the cause of Mr. Boulton's death, I procured some of it, and gave two ounces to a dog of a middle size, about ten o'clock in the morning. The dog, after swallowing this dose, ran about for the space of an hour, and then slept for about two hours, when he waked apparently in great pain, refused both victuals and drink, and was convulsed. About twelve o'clock at night, I was inclined to put an end to his misery, but for the sake of the experiment it was determined to wait the final effect of the poison, which probably took place soon
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after, as he was found cold and stiff at five o'clock the next morning.

I opened the dog, and the appearances were nearly the same as those observed in Mr. Boulton's stomach. The only difference in the two cases was in the distance of time from the administering the poison to the death. The dog never vomited altho' he swallowed more than Mr. Boulton, for the glass the latter took it from could not hold quite two ounces.

Egham,

Oct. 20, 1788.

V. *An account of a case of Amaurosis cured by Electricity. Communicated in a letter to Dr. Simmons, by Mr. Miles Partington.*

A NN Mackarel, of Shiffnal, in Shropshire, aged ten years, had been seized, about eleven months before I saw her, with a violent pain in her left temple, which was soon followed by a remarkable blackness of the skin of the eyelids of the same side, extending towards the cheek-bone. To this, in a few days, succeeded a dropping of the upper lid over the eye, ac-