

## VII.

*Case of Splenitis Acutus, in which the Serum of the Blood drawn from the Arm had the appearance of Milk.* By P. CULLEN, Esq. Surgeon, Sheerness.

I BEG leave to communicate to you a very singular circumstance, which lately occurred to me in bleeding a patient labouring under splenitis acutus. The serum of the blood was *white*, exactly in colour and consistence like milk, with the crassamentum floating in it, which was cupped and sized. This patient was bled *five* successive times. The three first bleedings exhibited the same kind of serum as abovementioned; but the two last were natural in appearance. I sent a vial containing some of this serum to Mr Brooks, lecturer on anatomy, &c. in London, who shewed it to Dr Hooper; and this latter gentleman found it to consist almost entirely of coagulable lymph. I have some of the same serum still by me, which, though drawn from the patient in November last, is still unaltered in its appearance, except being a little thicker, and it emits but very little fetor. I have subjoined a few particulars of this case, which, I hope, will be found interesting.

The subject of this singular occurrence is a Thomas Halke, labourer in his Majesty's Ordnance at this place, aged 35, of a thin spare habit of body, and sallow complexion, addicted, (moderately) in the early part of his life, to spirituous liquors; latterly to ale or porter.

He first of all complained of a pain of his left side, on the 14th of June ult. (1810), which appearing then more of a spasmodic than inflammatory nature, was treated with aperients, fomentation, and volatile liniment, to which it yielded in a few days. He was not bled at this time. Since that, he says, he had been subject to frequent loose stools, and transient pains of the same side; but not so much as to require medicine. From his account, the stools must have been of the dysenteric kind.

Nov. 24th, (1810.)—In the morning, he came to my house, complaining of a return of the pains of his left side; and, recollecting the former treatment, I ordered him immediately an aperient draught of the pulv. jalap. comp., a fomentation, and volatile liniment. In the evening, I was sent for to his lodgings. The draught had operated; the fomentation, &c. had been used: he was, however, much worse. The pain was very severe, and chiefly

chiefly seated about the middle of the left hypochondrium, extending forward as far as the cartilago ensiformis, and backward to the vertebræ. There was little or no tension of the part; but the pain was increased on pressure made all along the edges of the costæ spuria. He was bent forward, and lying on his right side; nor could he be removed from that position, but with increased suffering. From his first attack, in June, he said he could never lie easy but on his right side. He had neither nausea nor vomiting; neither dyspnœa nor cough; and the right hypochondrium was free from any uneasiness. There was no manifest enlargement of the spleen, but all the symptoms were evidently referred to the region of that viscus. Symptomatic fever had taken place. He was bled immediately to the extent of 14 or 16 oz. The blood flowed in a *full* and *florid* stream; but, on reaching the bason, I was surprised to observe a whitish appearance, forming like a cloud on the surface of the blood, which made me suppose that there had been some milk in the bason; but I was soon satisfied to the contrary. The bleeding gave some relief. I ordered him the pulv. antim. with nitre and digitalis in powder, the mist. salin. and fomentation and liniment to be repeated. Before I left the room, I was astonished to see the serum like so much milk, with the crassamentum floating in it.

*Nov. 25th.*—This morning I found the blood as I had left it, with the crassamentum cupped and sizy, of a darkish colour on its under surface, and loose in its texture. The pain had returned. He was bled again to the same extent, and with exactly the same appearance of white milky serum, and cupped sizy crassamentum. Contin. med. et applic. empl. lyttæ lateri dolenti. In the evening, the pain continuing, he was bled the third time, to the extent of about 12 oz. which exhibited the same phenomenon. By this third bleeding he was much relieved. Contin. med.

*26th.*—This day he was so much better, that it was not necessary to bleed him. The blister had taken full effect.

*27th.*—Having some return of pain, he was bled the fourth time, to about 10 oz. The blood had now a very different aspect. The serum was clear, except a little tinge of yellow in it, the crassamentum less cupped, and less sizy; also more florid in colour.—Contin. med. &c.

*28th.*—The pain not being not entirely gone, he was bled the fifth time, to about 8 oz. which had quite a natural appearance, the crassamentum neither cupped nor sizy. Contin. med. pro re nata.

After this he continued to mend gradually; and as soon as the inflammatory symptoms were entirely subsided, I thought proper

proper to put him under a gentle course of calomel, which I did. He is now quite recovered, and seems to enjoy altogether better health than before his indisposition. Whilst he remains here, I shall keep my eye upon him, and particularly attend to any of his future ailments. I examined his left hypochondrium lately, but could not discover any enlargement of the spleen. The climate of Sheerness being low and marshy, causes intermittents to be endemic here; so that I daily meet with cases of splenitis chronicus, and sometimes splenitis acutus, as sequelæ of these intermittents, but have never witnessed any milky coloured serum before; nor has any of the medical practitioners here.

P. S.—I forgot to mention, that the day after it was taken, the white serum was tasted, and gave the sensation of an emulsion made with volatile alkali. May it not be inferred, as very probable, that this uncommon appearance may be owing to a rapid absorption of fat, more particularly from the omentum, becoming miscible with the aqueous part of the blood, by means of some portion of ammonia, or volatile alkali, present in that blood, thus forming a kind of natural emulsion? Only, this does not coincide with Dr Hooper's experiment, above related, whereby he says he found it to consist almost entirely of coagulable lymph.  
*Sheerness, 20th February 1811.*

## VIII.

*Fatal Effect of Eau Medicinale.* Communicated by JOHN RING, Esq. Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

MR SMITH, of Bishop's Yard, Charles Street, Grosvenor Square, 65 years of age, was troubled with the gout when 12 years old, and, in general, had it twice a year, for the last 25 years. He frequently had it in his stomach, as well as in his limbs.

In the Spring of 1810, he took half a bottle of the eau medicinale, which operated as a cathartic, and, in the space of twelve hours, he was much relieved.

On Sunday, the 25th of November, he was seized with the gout in his foot, but was not confined to his bed. On Wednesday, the 28th, he took half a bottle of the eau medicinale, which operated violently as an emetic, and cathartic, and a sudorific.

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