

## **On the use of tobacco in the treatment of tetanus / by B. Travers, jun.**

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21

ON THE  
USE OF TOBACCO IN THE TREAT-  
MENT OF TETANUS.

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St. Thomas's Hospital.

IN forwarding you the following case for publication, I think it right to intimate that I do not blindly advocate the use of tobacco in traumatic tetanus. I can confidently state, however, that I have never seen an instance wherein it failed for a time to check and mitigate the violence of the spasm; and I have now witnessed its operation in many cases.

I have to urge against the objection or argument founded upon its frequent ultimate failure, which cannot be denied, that it has succeeded in a larger proportion of instances than any other remedy ever yet tried or suggested. The present is the third case wherein I have seen tobacco save life in traumatic tetanus; and, in a valuable statistical notice, to be found in Mr. Blizard Curling's Treatise, we learn that "of nineteen cases in which tobacco was employed nine recovered." p. 168.

Like all essentially nervous diseases, tetanus, apart from the effects of treatment, kills by exhaustion—sometimes primary, sometimes remote. A skilful surgeon knows that, after allaying spasm, he has still much to do; the triumph is but half achieved. Open bowels, appetite, and active support, are means quite as essential to the required end as repose, or the removal of a local irritant. The fatality of lock-jaw is proverbial. I have before me the particulars of seventeen cases, and I must have seen others during the past fifteen years. Of the above seventeen, twelve died, and five recovered. Of the latter, two were decidedly modified by hysterical symp-



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toms. One, a child, was profusely salivated under the late Mr. Tyrrell in this hospital. The remaining two were treated with tobacco; and the present case constitutes, at least, the third instance of the happy operation of that herb within my own knowledge in this formidable disease.

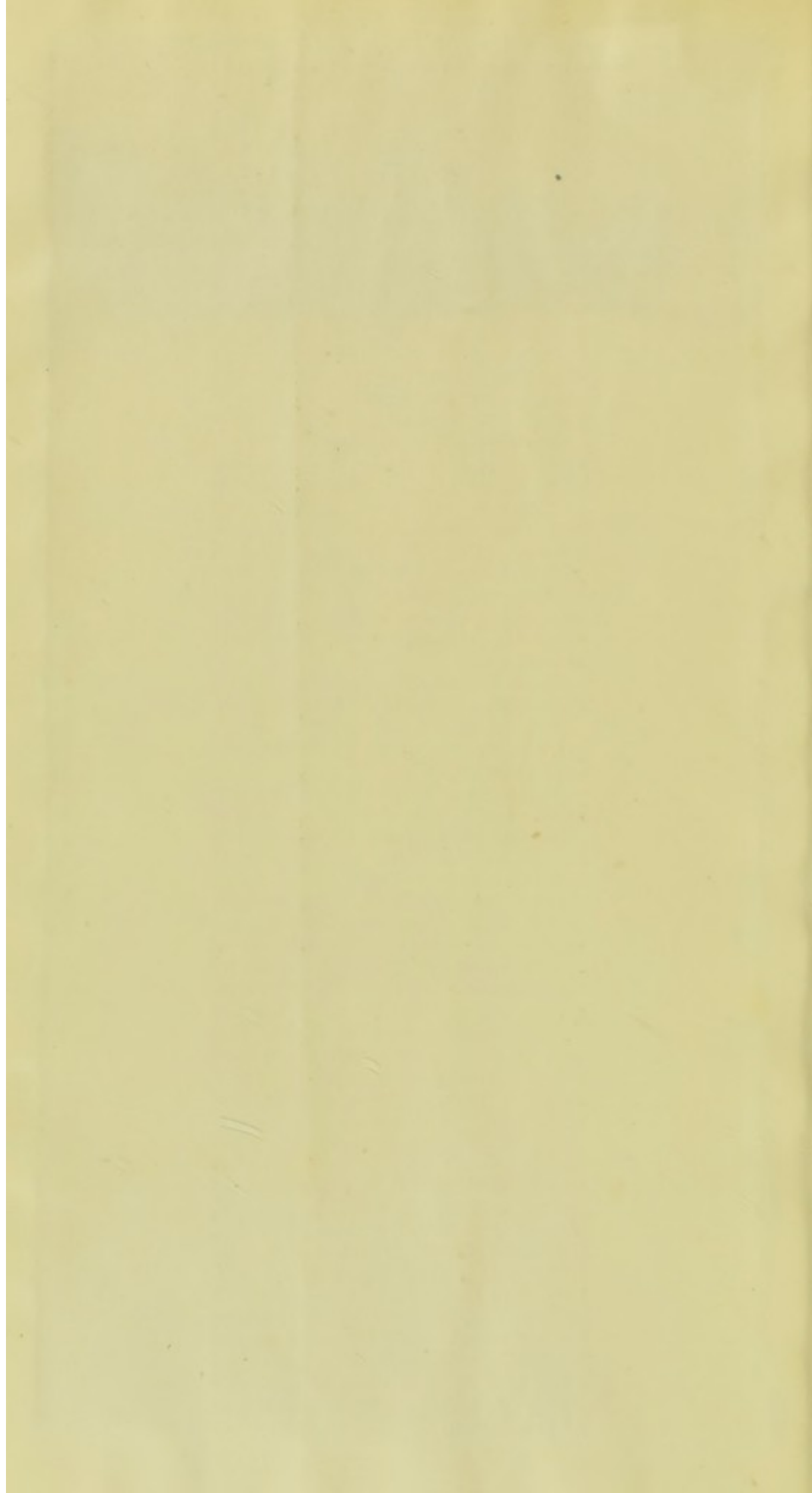
*Case of Tetanus.*—W. S., æt. 22, of Newcastle, a fireman on board the "London Merchant" steam-boat, got his left foot entangled in the gear of the engine-pump at sea, which caused extensive laceration of integument, and comminuted fracture of the two outermost metatarsal bones. Much blood was lost at the time; and the part was temporarily dressed with a balsamic application and bandage. He was admitted into Henry's Ward on the 10th of July, the accident having occurred on the 8th. He was attacked with spasm on the 20th inst. Symptoms commenced in the ordinary manner, with stiffness of the jaw, difficult mastication, epigastric tenderness, and subsequent spasm, affecting all the voluntary muscles with progressive violence.

22d.—Tr. Cannabis Indic. ℥xx. 4tis; Porter, Oij.; P. Jalap cum Hydrarg. ℥j.

23d.—Aug. Tr. ad, ℥xxx. Wine, ℥vj.; eggs, arrow-root, extra diet, and beer as before.

25th.—Aug. Tr. ad, ℥xl. 3ta quaque horá. Up to this time the foot was supported by a pillow, the parts being sedulously poulticed; but the patient was in no respect better.

On Sunday, the 26th, being 18 days, and 6 days respectively from the receipt of the injury and occurrence of spasm, I removed the broken bones by disarticulation at their tarsal extremities, having first picked away the sloughs which lay on the surface in a pool of pus. Two ligatures and cold water dressing were applied. These measures were followed by some relief of the jaw. ℞ Calomel, gr. v.; Pulv. Antimon. Tart. g. ʒ.; Brandy, ℥iv.; beef-tea, Oij. Vesp. Mustard poultice "epigastrio" where he complained of increasing pain, aggravated by pressure. Yesterday a catheter was tried; but the spasm was too great to admit of its introduction. The pulse, after operation, was 130. In the afternoon he passed urine, but no stool. The spasm did not return until 11 P.M. A second M. S. C. enema produced copious stool about 11 P.M. Continues to pass urine freely. At midnight, Mist. Tabaci, ℥ss. ad Oss. statim.





27th, 12½ A.M.—Enema produced great faintness and cold sticky sweat, with faltering pulse, a relaxation of spasm, and abdominal pain; pulse 116, small. At 11 P.M. urines freely; pulse 100; great rigidity and epigastric tenderness, but no spasm.

Tetanic symptoms recurring without

2

permanent abatement, though there were intervals of repose, the tobacco was employed as follows:—On the 28th, ℞ ad Oj.; 29th, ditto, Oj.; 30th, Oss. ad, ℥ss. A poultice was now applied to the sore, and subsequently plaister, which, however, was withdrawn, as causing too much irritation. 27th, Tr. Opii, ℥ij.; beef-tea, &c. as before. 28th, Cascarella, with Ammon. and Hyoscyamus, was given, and subsequently withdrawn, as it seemed to provoke or rather increase the gastric irritation. 29th, Calomel, gr. v. 31st, Vespere, Calomel, gr. v.; Opii, gr. jss. During the above period of four days, which was a critical time, his rest was much broken.

28th.—He protruded his tongue rather better; and the pulse fell manifestly.

29th.—He was better in all respects; pulse 94; urine is drawn off twice a day as a precaution, the spasm no longer interfering with the operation.

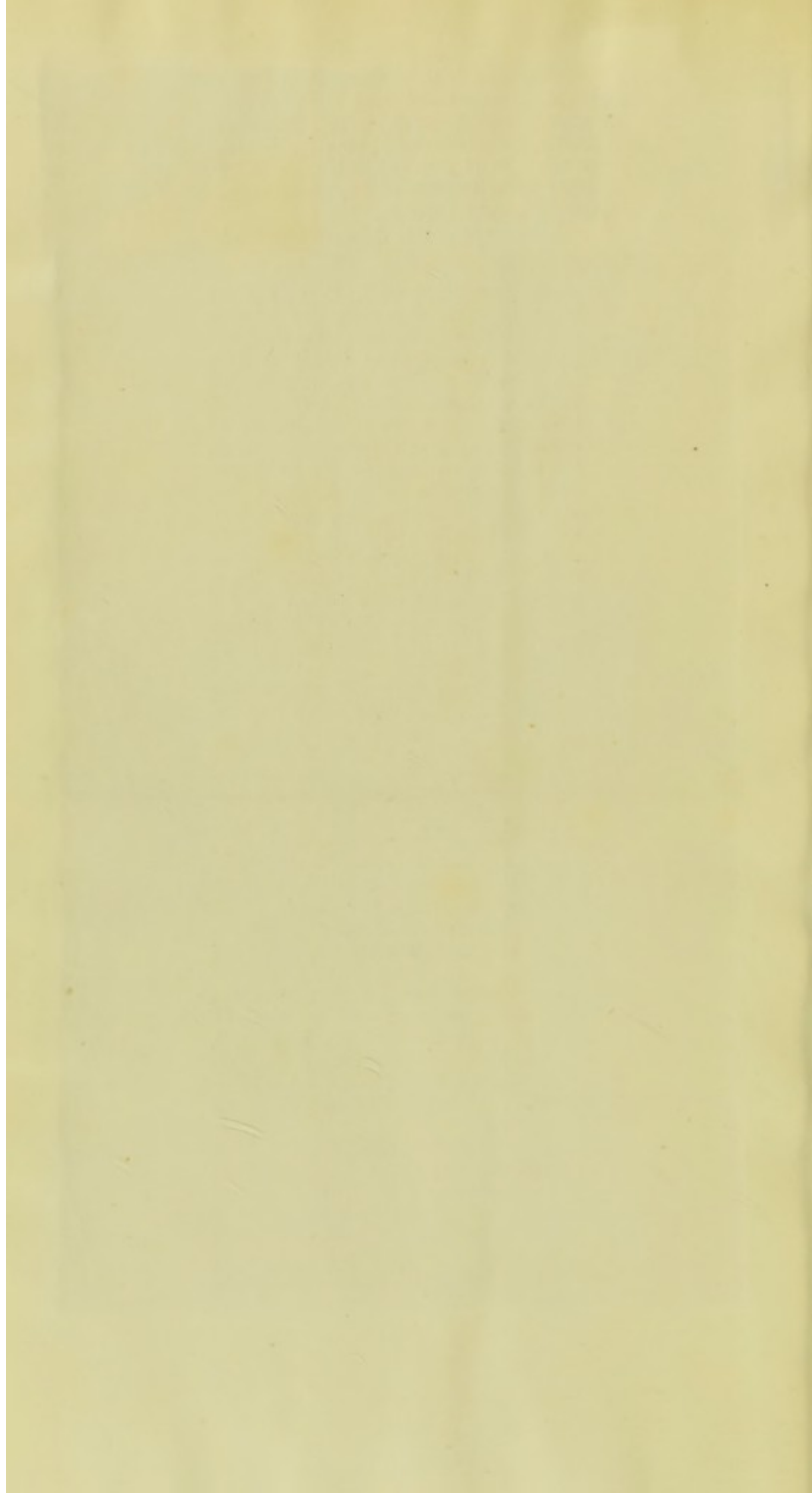
Aug. 1st.—The jaw was more lax. Mustard poultice “epigastrio,” morning and evening, for half an hour. Morphiae Muriat. gr. j. vespere.

2d.—Bowels confined; water retained; is not so well; Morph. gr. ½ n. et m.

3d.—Passed a good night; no action from the bowels. ℞ Enema M. S. C. At 4 P.M., ℞ Calomel, gr. iij.; Opii, gr. j. statim. Subsequently the bowels were relieved, and he showed more disposition to take nourishment than heretofore.

4th.—Ordered him Liquor Opii Sedativ. ℥xx.; Infus. Cascarill. ℥ss.; M. Camphoræ, ℥ss.; t. d. s. and a double dose at night, making forty minims of Battley's, “horá somni.”

On and after the 5th he began to mend permanently, and in a marked manner.



8th.—He urined freely.

13th.—He could masticate, and took nourishment greedily; bowels and bladder acting naturally and regularly; all spasm and numbness have subsided for some days; motions still stiffly and slowly performed; sweats profusely; pulse 80, and tranquil; tongue clean.

16th.—A week has elapsed since the spasm and trismus began definitively to subside. In the interval, the daily progress has been most marked and uninterrupted. The nights are tranquil, and the appetite for broth and semi solids, with beer and wine, very great.

29th.—Patient convalescent, quoad constitutional disease. The opiate had been gradually reduced to  $\text{m} \times$ . (Battley) bis die; hodie (29th)  $\text{m} \times$ . in hor. somni. Sore contracting, and healthy. The patient is rapidly acquiring flesh, and soon afterwards he left the house. The foot-stump was still granulating healthily, and nearly well.

*Note.*—Since the daily use of opium the bowels and bladder have regained their ordinary power and function. Prior to this time the bladder required artificial relief twice, or once at least, per diem. The fluid scanty, and high coloured. Its retention seemed always to aggravate gastric pain and abdominal tension, which were at times very great, calling for the frequent application of mustard and injections per anum, without which no action could be obtained at all at such times. A remarkable numbness of the right lower extremity supervened upon the cessation of spasm in the part; but this symptom gave way after a time under the benign action of the opiate.



