

tina appeared to be communicated during this state. May it not be that the serous effusion is an evidence of a morbid action entirely different from that in which the febrile poison is generated? I remain, Sir, yours obediently,

GEORGE BEDDOW.

Jennen's-row, Birmingham,  
Dec. 8, 1842.

CONSTIPATION, FROM STRICTURE,  
DURING FORTY-THREE DAYS.

*To the Editor.*—Sir: Having perused, in THE LANCET, for Nov. 26th (page 327), a case related by Dr. Johnson at the Westminster Medical Society, in which constipation, arising from scirrhus of the rectum, had existed for forty-five days, and observing that Dr. Johnson remarks that “he had never before known such protracted constipation dependent on *disease*,” may I beg the favour of your insertion of a case, in some respects analogous to his, which lately occurred in my own practice. On the evening of the 23rd of April, my attendance was requested on a married lady, forty-seven years of age, who stated that for five previous days no evacuation had taken place from the bowels, and as she had taken salts and senna without effect, she thought it right to seek medical aid, although not suffering any further derangement of her health. Her appetite was unimpaired, and she had neither pain nor sickness. Calomel, castor and croton oil, elaterium, turpentine, and, in fact, purgatives of every kind, were administered, and (which is remarkable) uniformly retained by the stomach. Injections of warm-water and the tobacco clyster, the warm-bath and friction to the abdomen, were used, and a bougie was also tried, but could not be carried beyond the rectum. Although these remedies proved unavailing, the pain suffered by the patient was inconsiderable, and she was able to take carriage-exercise until within two days of her death, which took place on the thirty-eighth day of my attendance, making (the five-days previous to my seeing her included) a constipation of forty-three days duration.

A post-mortem examination discovered a stricture at the junction of the sigmoid flexure with the rectum, the large intestines being enormously distended, and filled with fæces of a soft consistence; the colon was gangrenous, particularly at about the transverse arch. The contraction, which was of a circular form, and rather more than an inch in length, had no doubt existed to a certain extent for a long time, as the bowel was much thickened, and converted into a kind of gristly substance, its passage being narrowed to the size of a crow-quill. All

the other viscera were normal. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. C. WALLIS.

Castle Cary, Somerset,  
Dec. 8, 1842.

CURE OF  
VOLUNTARY STARVATION.

A CORRESPONDENT at Brompton lays before us the following anecdote of a cure singularly effected in an insane patient who had obstinately refused to eat, related, he says, by one of the most talented and popular preachers in Naples, from the pulpit, to a congregation of nearly fifteen hundred persons, in his presence, in 1832, while illustrating the effects of mental hallucination, *à propos* of the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's transformation, which the preacher referred to mental delirium, quoting in support of his view the opinions of several learned theological doctors:—

“Whilst residing at Rome,” said the preacher, “I paid a visit to the lunatic asylum there, and among the more remarkable patients one was pointed out to me who had been saved with much difficulty from inflicting death upon himself by voluntary starvation, in bed, under an impression that he was defunct, declaring that dead people never ate. It was soon obvious to all that the issue must be fatal, when the humane doctor bethought him of the following stratagem. Half a dozen of the attendants, dressed in white shrouds, and their faces and hands covered with chalk, were marched in single file, with dead silence, into a room adjoining that of the patient, where he observed them, through a door, purposely left open, sit down to a hearty meal. ‘Halloa!’ said he that was *deceased*, presently, to an attendant, ‘who be they?’ ‘Dead men,’ was the reply. ‘What,’ rejoined the corpse, ‘do dead people eat?’ ‘To be sure they do, as you see,’ answered the attendant. ‘If that’s the case,’ exclaimed the defunct, ‘I’ll join them, for I’m famished;’ and thus instantly was broken the spell.”

VENT IN THE TOOTH WITH  
INTRA-DENTAL ABSCESS.

*To the Editor.*—Sir: Mr. Saunders, in his treatment of intra-dental abscess (page 347), appears to have overlooked a cause that must prevent his plan of drilling the inserted “stopping” in teeth, from being likely to meet with continued success. With whatever degree of firmness tinfoil may be inserted into a carious tooth, in cases in which the hole has been drilled, substances of a hard nature will, in mastication, from the malleability of the metal, close the vent in a short time, and this defect will be increased