

ARTICLE VI.—*Case of Neuralgia cured by Acupuncture.* Communicated by J. HUNTER EWING, M. D.

THE attention of the medical public having been of late much excited on the subject of acupuncture, I am induced to communicate the following case.

For eighteen months, Miss ——— had been afflicted, at intervals, with a severely painful affection of the nerves of the right cheek, immediately below the orbit of the eye, and extending to the angle of the lower jaw. On the 14th of January 1826, she was attacked more violently than usual, and the remedies, which had previously afforded some relief, now failed. Stimulating cataplasms, warm embrocations, laudanum, internally and externally, heat applied externally to the cheek by means of very hot flannels, produced not the slightest mitigation of the pain; and she continued to suffer excessively until the afternoon of the 15th; when acupuncture being proposed, she consented to the operation with this remark,—“any thing to relieve me from this agony.”

The needles were immediately procured, and three inserted about an inch from each other. Two in a line parallel with the inferior edge of the orbit of the eye, and half an inch below it; and a third below, and equidistant from the others. The first two were introduced to the depth of three-fourths of an inch; the last, a full inch. They were inserted very gradually and with a rotary motion.

The second needle was scarcely introduced, before the patient exclaimed, “the pain has entirely left me.” When the third was introduced, she experienced a stiffness in the muscles of the cheek, and a creeping sensation, as if a spider’s web had been drawn across the face; but no painful sensation whatever.

Such was the exhausted state of her system from the excessive pain she had suffered, that when thus relieved, she requested a pillow to rest her head on, and fell into a gentle slumber.

About two hours after the insertion of the needles, I again visited my patient, and found her still perfectly free from pain, and seated at a table reading. She thanked me for the relief I had been the means of affording her, and requested me not to withdraw the needles, lest the pain might return. Upon being

apprised of the risk that might attend their being allowed to remain, she observed, that she would rather have a servant to watch her whilst she slept. The propriety of their removal being further urged, she at last consented. There was no return of pain.

The next morning, the patient remarked, that the stiffness of the cheek, and a numbness of the whole right side, continued through the night; and though she did not sleep very soundly, she was free from pain and rested well.

By the third day, the stiffness and numbness had passed away, and there was no return of pain. Several weeks have now passed, and she has had no relapse; although often since exposed to causes, which, heretofore, had always excited violent attacks. Previous to the operation, she seldom passed as many days without severe suffering.

Although I have performed this operation many times, and been present when others have performed it, I have never seen a case, in which its efficacy was so decided, or in which the relief afforded was more unquestionably attributable to the action of the needles.