

years since broke out in a Methodist chapel in England, determined by fanatical excitement; such is an analogous malady prevalent during the last century in the Shetland isles, produced and still propagated by imitation. The convulsive scenes of the camp meetings of the Americans are precisely of the same description. But what is most singular of all is, that at this day there exists in Abyssinia, a malady almost identical with *tarantulum* and termed the 'Zigretier.' The patients, as in Italy, dance to music, which is their only remedy. The wolf-madness, too, exists in the same country, and it is worthy of remark, that Abyssinia in respect to civil war, profound ignorance, general superstition, and facility of nervous excitement, is at this moment in a moral condition almost identical with that of the middle ages of Europe."

Now, Gentlemen, a few remarks suggest themselves on the perusal of the preceding narrative. The compression of the abdomen is curious, as we still find this of constant occurrence in somnambulists and magnetic persons, and the tympanitic development of gas is frequent in hysteria and other nervous disorders. The peculiar movements cannot but remind you of the experiments of Fleurens on the section of the peduncles of the cerebellum in pigeons and rabbits, which, immediately after the operation, commenced to move in circles, or in a retrograde direction, until completely exhausted. The extraordinary effects of the instinct of imitation in spreading these epidemics, is but an example on the grand scale of what we see daily instances of in yawning, hiccuping, coughing, and other similar acts, and in the propagation of hysteria and epilepsy. Some persons, again, possess an irresistible tendency to imitate others. Tissot relates a case of a female who never could avoid doing everything she saw any one else do. She was obliged to walk blindfolded in the streets; and if you tied her hands, she experienced intolerable anguish until they were loosened. The commission of a great or extraordinary crime, to this day produces, not unfrequently, a kind of mania of imitation in the district in which it happens. Religious incidents have been constantly known to occasion similar events; and what is remarkable is, that the scene or place of the first event seemed to favour its repetition by other persons approaching it. Thus a supposed miracle having been performed before the gate of the Convent of St. Geneviève, such a number of similar occurrences happened on the same spot in a few days, that the police was compelled to post a peremptory notice on the gate, "prohibiting any individual from working

miracles on the place in question." When the locality was thus shut up, the *thaumaturgia* soon ceased. It is not long, indeed, since we witnessed in Paris two events of a similar character. About four years since, at the Hôtel des Invalides, a veteran hung himself on the threshold of one of the doors of a corridor. No suicide had occurred in the establishment for two years previously; but in the succeeding fortnight five invalids hung themselves on the same cross bar, and the governor was obliged to shut up the passage. During the last days of the empire, again, an individual ascended the column in the Place Vendôme and threw himself down and was dashed to pieces, and the event excited a great sensation. In the course of the ensuing week four persons imitated the example, and the police were obliged to proscribe the entrance to the column.

## DEMOLITION OF STONE IN THE BLADDER.

BARON HEURTELOUP'S PERCUTEUR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have the honour of sending you another case of stone in the bladder, treated successfully by the *percuteur courbe à marteau*. This case will, I think, be interesting to your readers, as the patient who forms the subject of it was relieved of the stone, notwithstanding a stricture of the urethra which existed at the same time.

I observed in the last Number of THE LANCET, a paper on an instrument also denominated "*percuteur*," or "*percussor*," and which is said to have been constructed in such a manner as to obviate many defects presented by my *primitive percuteur*.

I shall say nothing respecting this paper, since the description given of the *primitive percuteur*, which has been modified, is in no way a description of my *percuteur*. In fact, the idea which seems to have been formed of the instrument I constructed, is so unfavourable, that had I had no other, I am afraid I should never have obtained in proof of its efficacy, the favourable cases with which your readers are acquainted.

I presented the *percuteur* to the Academy of Sciences of Paris, and deferred publishing it until that learned body had pronounced on its merits, in order to make known at the same time the instrument and the decision of the Academy respecting it. My not having yet published the *percuteur*, explains why any instrument constructed on the same principles, and acting in the same manner, cannot be denominated my

*percuteur* improved; for we cannot discover the defects of an instrument that we are not well acquainted with; and if these defects are not known to us, we cannot obviate them. If even I had published my *percuteur*, or if it had been examined and studied in its details, would it not be necessary, in order to discover defects, to operate frequently with it? And must not the necessity of making alterations be founded on numerous practical and well-authenticated facts? Besides this, why seek to correct the defects of the first *percuteurs*, when it has been my constant aim, and I trust I have in some measure succeeded, to correct them myself? If any alterations were required in my *percuteur*, ought they not to consist in *correcting* my last and probably most perfect instruments, and not my first and most imperfect ones?

From these simple reflections, you will, I think, conclude, that the instrument constructed within *three* or *four* months, and published in your last Number, is not, or rather cannot be, an improvement on any of my instruments.

The note which contains your impartial remark on the success of my operations, is most just. It is, in fact, of the utmost necessity so to construct an instrument which is to act thus forcibly, as to give to all its parts as much strength and power of resistance as possible. This, for upwards of twenty months, has afforded me a subject of continual and arduous study, and of numerous trials and experiments. I furnished a convincing proof of this, by *laying before the Westminster Medical Society a few weeks back, a collection of about eighty different models of the percuteur*. If, Sir, you add to this long series of labours, the numerous and varied experiments by which I have regulated, with the utmost nicety, the weight of the hammers, and the length of their levers, according to the size, and, consequently, the power of resistance of the instrument, you will I think conclude, that I have, as far as long study and experience could assist and instruct me, sought to render my instrument as safe, and render the chance of which you speak as remote as possible.

That some success has attended my endeavours will, I trust, be proved, as you remark, by the considerable number of well-authenticated cases which have already been published in your valuable journal, and this will receive additional support by those which I shall beg to forward to you. Allow me now to request the insertion of this letter and the case subjoined. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

HEURTELoup, M.D.

18, Holles-street, Cavendish-square.

Jan. 8th, 1833,

#### CASE OF CALCULUS CURED BY THE PERCUTEUR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following is a case treated by *lithotripsy*, to the performance of which I have myself been an eye-witness. I trust you will consider it worthy of a page in your invaluable journal, not merely as a scientific matter, but in the hope that it may be the cause of many of our fellow-creatures, similarly situated, receiving the same beneficial effects as my patient has done. I am, Sir, yours, most obediently,

(Signed) ROBERT VARDY, Surg.

5, Princes-st., Cavendish-sq.,

Nov. 15, 1832.

Mr. F., aged 64, residing at East Shaf-ton, Morpeth, tall, and of a good constitution, having, through the course of his life, been almost entirely free from disease, consulted me about twelve years ago for a difficulty in voiding his urine. A careful examination showed me that there was a stricture in the urethra, for the removal of which I pursued an appropriate mode of treatment. The stricture was very considerable, and scarcely admitted through it a bougie No. 1. It extended about an inch in length, and was situated a few lines anteriorly to the ligam. triangul. After having treated it at intervals for ten years and upwards, I succeeded in dilating it sufficiently to introduce a metallic bougie No. 14. After this Mr. F. was able to pass his water in a tolerably full and strong stream, until about a year and a half ago, when he again consulted me for a painful and unusual sensation which he felt in the bladder and rectum, especially when he walked or took horse exercise (which his vocations obliged him occasionally to do), and also for an occasional stoppage and irregularity in his stream of water. I again carefully sounded him, and found that although the strictured portion was rather more contracted than when he last left me, yet that it was not sufficiently so to account for the present symptoms, and inequalities in the stream of urine. I proceeded to examine the bladder, fully suspecting that it contained a calculous concretion. My suspicions proved correct. A small stone was distinctly felt, and I advised Mr. F. to proceed immediately to London. This he consented to, and begged me to accompany him. He had an insuperable objection to lithotomy, and I therefore directed my attention to the other method of relieving patients of the stone without incision. Having seen in THE LANCET the history of several cases treated successfully by Baron Heurteuloup, I determined to place my patient under his care. When we ar-