

when examined by the microscope, appeared under the form of rhombic plates. They were soluble in ether and hot alcohol, from the latter of which they recrystallized in cooling, and were insoluble in a solution of potash, which, however, removed their colour. The lens was anteriorly sprinkled closely with similar crystals, but when these were removed, by digesting with ether, the lens itself remained white and opaque. It was insoluble in water, alcohol, ether, or dilute acid, but readily dissolved when gently heated in a solution of potash, and was again precipitable by acetic acid. I think there can be no doubt but that the crystals were chiefly composed of *cholesterine*, and that the cataract was due to the deposition of some proteine compound, and a distinct phenomenon from the crystallization of the cholesterine discovered upon its surface, and which was afterwards so manifest in the anterior chamber." Besides the general interest of this very curious case, there are two topics connected with it on which we would remark: First,—the value of having accurate drawings made of every remarkable case which occurs, even though at the moment no ultimate benefit, except that of representing a peculiar form of disease, may appear to be gained; and secondly,—the advantage which ophthalmic surgery must derive from the analysis of morbid products such as that described.—*Dub. Quart. Journ.*, May, 1848.

65. *Sparkling Eye*. By W. R. WILDE, Esq.—In synchysis and certain forms of ophthalmic disease we sometimes observe, upon looking steadily into the depth of the eye, that there is a peculiar scintillating appearance exhibited. At times this has the appearance of small sparks of light, not unlike the phosphorescence which sometimes appears upon the surface of the sea, particularly when the water is agitated. Those brilliant sparks generally appear to rise up from the inferior surface of the eye, and fall down again in a description of shower. In two cases which we have had under our care, this appearance could be induced by any motion or exertion, when it very much resembled the look which a bottle of *eau de sie* presents when the gold leaf in it is shaken up. There are other appearances in the eye of a luminous character, with which this must not be confounded. In certain forms of amaurosis we can, particularly when the pupil is dilated, perceive a brilliant yellow appearance, with a metallic lustre, and of a spherical shape, lining the fundus of the eye. At first view this might be taken for the early stage of malignant disease, but the history of the case, the age of the patient, and the attendant circumstances, will enable us to distinguish it from that affection, although at times the differential diagnosis is exceedingly difficult. The scintillations to which we have alluded may or may not be attendant upon this form of disease. The cause of these appearances has lately engaged the attention of several continental writers. M. Desmarres thinks that it is due to a peculiar morbid disposition of the hyaloid cells, which, being less distended than natural, on account of the fluidity of the vitreous humour, and floating one over the other, reflect separately, instead of refracting the light. M. Malgaigne considers that this phenomenon is owing to the presence of little foreign bodies floating in the vitreous humour, and put in motion during the movements of the eye. These he believes to be crystals of cholesterine, which reflect the light as they present themselves to it in several inclinations. M. Taignot's opinion coincides with the latter. He says that he has collected some of these sparkling particles, and that they bore the greatest possible analogy to the corpuscles of cholesteria sometimes found in the liquid of hydrocele. He does not know, he says, whether their chemical composition be the same, but he considers it probable; and he thinks that the crystalline capsule, from its serous character, at least upon one aspect, may give rise to a product similar to that produced by the tunica vaginalis.\* We incline to the opinion, that in a great many cases the sparkling appearances are caused by the chemical substance just alluded to; and we are the more induced to believe this from the examination of the gold-leaf cholesterine cataract already detailed; [see previous article;] but there are other cases where the brilliant appearances do not present a palpable character like those just described, but appear as brilliant, evanescent scintillations of light, even in the anterior chamber.—*Ibid*.

\* *Revue Medico Chirurgicale*, August, 1847.