that the existence of the former was merely a consequence of the condition of the latter, and not the result of any organic disease in the trachea and oesophagus themselves. Underwood, treating of inward fits, which he supposed due to spasm of the stomach, lungs, or other vital organ, mentions some symptoms, as blueness of the lips, turning up the eyes, faintness, &c., which might be with propriety referred to some thymic affection, and Mr. Hood, who wrote on the subject in the year 1827, finding hydrocephalus not unfrequently associated with enlarged thymus, regarded any considerable increase of it as peculiarly dangerous, not only from the pressure which the trachea, oesophagus, and subclavian vein may sustain, but more especially from the obstruction presented by it to the return of blood from the head to the heart through the larger vessels, and hence conceived that slight surprise, bodily exertion, or sudden excitement to cry, may, according to circumstances, bring on comparatively slight and transient attacks, or the more alarming and fatal casualties of the disease.

For these reasons I consider the case as of peculiar interest; and seeing that this organ, which is especially connected with the embryonic condition, and is supposed, perhaps erroneously, to attain its greatest development during or soon after the termination of fetal life,—at which period its weight, according to Sharpey and others, does not exceed half an ounce, and its normal measurement barely exceeds two inches in length and an inch and a half in width, and that these dimensions are not much exceeded at the age of two years, when its growth and increase entirely cease,—has attained the size and outline above described, I think I am justified in calling attention to it in this communication, the length of which, I regret, scarcely allows me to say more than express my entire concurrence with the coroner in his remarks as to its rarity and interest, and in the somewhat strange and seemingly paradoxical, though otherwise true and appropriate, verdict of “accidental death from natural causes,” which closed the case and my connexion with it.

Sept. 1857.

ON A CASE OF

EXCISION OF THE KNEE-JOINT.

By JAMES M. MOULLIN, Esq., M.R.C.S.,
SURGEON TO THE WESTBOURNE DISPENSARY.

C. H—, aged ten years, a pale, delicate, strumous-looking lad, was brought to the Dispensary by his mother, who gave the following history of his case: When six years old, he received a slight hurt at the lower part of the thigh, immediately above the external condyle of the femur, which was followed by inflammation and abscess, leaving a permanent fistulous opening, with occasional discharge of thin, offensive matter. Some time afterwards, whilst at play, he was kicked on the joint by a schoolfellow, causing another and more violent attack of inflammation of the joint, accompanied with pain, for which he went into hospital. The swelling soon disappeared, and he was discharged. He was allowed to run about as usual. The limb became more painful, and he began to limp, and complained of pain when he rested on his heel. About this time he fell down and fractured the affected thigh-bone, at its upper third, and for which he went again into hospital. Soon after being discharged, the difficulty and pain in walking became greater, so that he was quite unable to put his heel to the ground, and rested his entire weight on his toes; the knee also becoming bent and painful at night. Walking gave great pain, and he frequently fell down at the slightest touch.

The knee is bent at a right angle, the head of the femur projecting over the tibia, so that the latter is dislocated backwards, and firmly fixed. The integument over the patella is ulcerated and adherent to that bone. There is a fistulous opening about one inch above the outer condyle, through which a probe passes into the joint, and dead bone is easily felt. The leg is much reduced in size; the tendo-Achillis firmly contracted, (requiring to be divided,) the heel being in a straight line with the leg.

As the boy was rapidly losing ground, it was decided, upon consultation, if possible, to save the limb by removing the joint, which was accordingly done on the 29th of August. The patient having been placed under the influence of chloroform, the joint was opened by a semilunar incision, including the

patella in the flap. The lateral ligaments being divided, the joint presented the following appearance:—Caries of the entire surface of the patella, also of the outer condyle and space between the condyles, the cartilage on the inner condyle being soft and easily removed. There was a great deal of yellow fat in the joint; tibia healthy. The removal of the first slice of bone disclosed an abscess in the inner condyle, and extensive mischief to the outer one; the abstraction of the second portion removed all disease from the inner condyle. I was now obliged to extend the external incision as high as the fistulous opening, and gouge out the entire remaining part of the outer condyle, and a portion of the side of the shaft of the femur. Here the periosteum was detached, and greatly thickened. The patella was removed, as also a thin layer of cartilage from the tibia. The wound was closed by six interrupted sutures, the limb placed in a modification of Price's splint, and cold water dressing applied. There was very little blood lost during the operation, and that principally venous; one artery only required tying. The chloroform caused a great deal of excitement. He was ordered fifteen minims of Battley's solution every two hours, and as much port wine as he could take. He slept well. The pulse, which was 120 after the operation, fell down to 90; no hæmorrhage; limb tumefied.

On the second day two sutures were removed; the wound partly united. Two more sutures were removed each day. Suppuration set in on the fourth day, and discharged freely through the old fistulous opening; otherwise, the incision was quite united on the sixth day, and he has progressed without a bad symptom. He was allowed sixteen ounces of port wine daily, strong beef-tea, chops, milk, and eggs, of all of which he partook freely. Fifteen minims of Battley's solution every night were sufficient to procure a good night's rest; and now all discharge has ceased, the limb firmly united, time only being required for consolidation, and he is rapidly gaining flesh and strength. The limb is three quarters of an inch shorter than its fellow.

Porchester-terrace North, Hyde-park, Oct. 1857.

ON A

CASE OF PUERPERAL CONVULSIONS.

By HENRY ST. JOHN BULLEN, Esq., M.R.C.S.,
MEDICAL OFFICER TO THE LAMBETH WORKHOUSE.

BRIDGET C—, thirty-two years of age, was admitted into the lying-in ward of this workhouse on the 6th of August last, about six A.M., suffering under symptoms of “delirium.” Shortly afterwards I saw her, and found her to be a person of anæmiated habit of body, and to all appearance in the last stage of pregnancy. Contemporaneous with my visit, she had a severe convulsion, which was rapidly succeeded by others at intervals of about ten minutes' duration. No measures were neglected, such as local and general depletion, the application of cold, &c.; and the result was that dilatation of the os uteri commenced, and labour advanced slowly, the vertex presenting. As the convulsions still continued, though at gradually increasing intervals, with the approval of my friend, Dr. Ladd, who accidentally looked in at this juncture, I administered chloroform. The effect was most beneficial. In a very few seconds, our patient was completely under its influence, and uterine action increased in such good earnest that in ten minutes or thereabouts from the first exhibition of the anæsthetic, the child was expelled. It was born dead, and had, I conjectured, been so for some hours. The mother had one convulsion afterwards, fell into a deep and prolonged sleep, and awoke the next morning very weak, but perfectly rational and sensible to external impressions, having been the contrary nearly thirty hours. At the end of a month she was perfectly convalescent.

Lambeth Workhouse, October, 1857.

SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.—A medical man, formerly deputy-professor at one of the faculties of France, who had embraced homeopathy, has just committed suicide by hanging. On his table an open letter was found, which had been written to him in 1854 by M. Manec, jun., author of a pamphlet against homeopathy. This certainly is a singular coincidence.—*Gazette Hebdomadaire de Médecine*, Oct. 9th.