ON CROUP,

BY J. JACKSON M. D.

In some fatal cases of croup which I have seen, the appearances on examination of the dead body, did not accord with those commonly noticed. It may be useful to record the facts, although we should not be in haste to form inferences from them.

In the cases to which I refer the mucous membrane of the larynx has been found inflamed, but without any false membrane, or lining of coagulable lymph. In the first of these cases the peculiar sound of croup was exceedingly evident, so that when entering the room where the child was, before shutting the door, I was satisfied of the nature of the complaint. A few hours before death I performed the operation of bronchotomy without affording any relief. It was the first fatal case of croup which had ever occurred to me, and I was extremely anxious to examine the larynx. With difficulty I obtained permission to do this, on condition that I would not extend the dissection beyond the neck. Dr. J. C. Warren accompanied me in the examination. We found the mucous membrane of the larynx much inflamed, and smeared over with a quantity of loose mucus, but without any false membrane. The inflammation extended into the trachea as far as we could examine. This case occurred nearly ten years ago and is given from memory, but of the accuracy of the important facts I am perfectly satisfied.

The second case happened about three years afterwards, and resembled that above described. The appearances in the larynx were the same. The lungs were more full of blood than usual.

The third case occurred in the winter 1810—11. The patient was a strong healthy boy, about five years old. I was called at 1 o'clock, P. M. when he had been sick twenty four hours. At that hour Dr. Bigelow visited him, and I saw him at 3 o'clock. He died at 4 o'clock. He had all the symptoms of croup exceedingly well marked, and I was particularly solici-

tous to examine the body, as I was then giving clinical lectures, and wished to exhibit the parts to my class. I removed the larynx and carried it immediately to my lecture-room, where I demonstrated to the students precisely the appearances I have described in the first case. There was not any coagulable lymph, the mucous membrane was highly inflamed and swollen, and the rima glottidis was thus very much narrowed. The membrane was smeared over with a thick mucus.

The fourth case is of very recent date. I was called to this on Sunday, the 5th of July, 1812, at 3 o'clock, P. M. The disease had commenced twenty hours before, and was very strongly marked. The symptoms were considerably mitigated after vomiting. I tried in vain to take blood; the child was very fat, and the veins were all hidden, even the external jugular. The respiration grew bad again before morning, but the patient lived till the next morning, the 7th, so that the disease continued two days and a half, or sixty hours. In eight hours after death, Dr. Bigelow examined the body, and the following is his report of the appearances. "The trachea with the larynx was removed. The whole tube was pervious as usual excepting the presence of a large quantity of mucus of the ordinary consistence. On dividing the larynx and trachea at the posterior side, and exposing the internal surface, the mucus being removed, a number of distinct red spots were discovered, of considerable size, on the lining membrane. One of these was immediately below the glottis. Between the mucus and the lining membrane there was no factitious substance whatever, nor any appearance the least resembling the membranes which I have seen formed in some other cases of croup. The lungs were not examined."

In the other cases I had thought it possible that the disease had not continued long enough to allow the effusion to take place, as the patients all died in less than forty-eight hours from the attack. But in this last case such a supposition cannot be admitted; for I have in my possession a preparation in which the false membrane is exhibited in great perfection, and this came from a patient of Dr. Channing's which I had seen with him, and in which death occurred in about thirty hours after the seizure.

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