Original Communications.

REMARKABLE CASE OF INJURY OF THE BRAIN. DEATH ON THE TENTH DAY.

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[AN abstract of the following case was presented, some months since, to the Boston Society for Medical Improvement by Dr. J. B. Upham. It excited considerable interest at the time, and was deemed worthy to rank among the many remarkable cases of injury to the brain which have been brought to the notice of the Society within the last few years. At our request, Dr. Cooper has furnished his original notes of the case, and has kindly deposited the spike and a portion of the planking alluded to in his report, in the Museum of the Massachusetts Medical College.—ED.]

On the morning of the 4th of December, 1868, I was called to see Edmund Seiger, about 28 years of age, who had fallen from a scaffold, 16½ feet high, in a barn, his head striking upon an iron spike which projected about two inches from the floor. This spike was made of wrought iron, with a flattened head projecting on either side from the shaft in the form of a T. It entered the head at the upper and posterior part of the right parietal bone, carrying before it a portion of the skull (an inch square) into the substance of the brain to the extent of about two inches. The skull was fractured likewise in a line extending from the point of the injury nearly to the right ear. This fracture allowed the bones to separate and close again, as the spike was driven through the skull, so as to button the patient firmly down to the floor.

Great injury had been done to the brain, before my arrival, in the attempts to extricate the head from this position—two strong men having exerted a good degree of force in attempting this, but in vain. The patient was finally released by splitting the

plank to which his skull was attached, an axe and a crowbar being used for this purpose. At the time of my arrival, about an hour and a half after the accident, the spike still remained in the skull. After removing this by careful separation of the parts, I extricated, by means of an elevator and forceps, the square piece of bone above mentioned, and subsequently four other smaller fragments, and raised the adjacent parts to their proper position. Immediately after this the patient was able to speak and to converse rationally. There was, however, a complete loss of sensation and motion on the left side. About seventy-two hours after, severe pain in the left arm and leg ensued, which lasted for half an hour, when almost instantly sensation returned and the pain subsided, but motion never returned. He continued in a rational condition, and wholly free from inflammatory symptoms, until the ninth day, his pulse never rising above 70 in the minute. On that day, however, the portions of the brain which had been broken down became separated and were discharged. From this time the patient rapidly sank, and died on the day following—the tenth from the time of the accident.

On examination after death, I found that the substance of the brain had been very much broken up for a space of about four inches in diameter and two inches in depth, caused by the patient's being violently wrenched and twisted around while spiked to the floor.

The spike measured 3¾ inches in length and 1½ inches across.

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SYPHILITIC STRICTURE OF THE ŒSOPHAGUS.

By W. A. GILLESPIE, M.D., Louisa Co., Va.

WRITERS for medical journals generally, in publishing ordinary and extraordinary cases and surgical operations, fail to give subsequent or final results. I will therefore call the attention of your readers to a case of syphilitic stricture of the œsophagus operated

[WHOLE No. 2199]