

## TUMOURS OF THE TENDO ACHILLIS.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—Permit me, through the medium of *THE LANCET*, to direct the attention of the medical public to a peculiar affection of the tendo Achillis.

About seven years since a coachman, of irregular dissipated habits, applied to me to relieve him from a tumour, about the size of a pigeon's egg, which occupied each tendo Achillis, about three inches above the os calcis, painful on pressure; the tumours materially impeded his march. He could not recollect when they first appeared, but represented them as very slowly increasing. I advised rest and the application of leeches. The punctures were followed by slight erythema. The patient insisted upon taking his usual journey of about forty miles, during the course of which he made no fewer than thirteen applications to his favourite brandy-bottle, by way of "keeping out the inflammation;" the result will be readily foreseen: a formidable erysipelas set in, and the man's life was saved with much difficulty. Amongst the means employed to arrest the inflammation was the nitrate of silver, which I purposely carried to vesication over the seat of the tumours. I soon after lost sight of the man, but, upon inquiry, about three months ago, I found that they had resisted all means used for their removal.

I recognised the same affection in an amiable and accomplished physician, about three years since. Here it commenced on the right side, and, after a few months, appeared in the left tendon, rather below that on the right. He employed anodyne and discutient liniments, and confined himself to the horizontal posture; but the tumours are nothing abated in point of size, though only occasionally troublesome from tenderness.

More recently I have been consulted by two persons of this neighbourhood for the same affection, and am disposed to think that it is not an uncommon one, possibly not confined to the tendo Achillis. The only authority whom I can recollect as noting the disease in question, is Mr. Mayo. In his late work on Pathology he gives an illustrative case, without comment:—

"A gentleman, æt. 32, after taking more exercise than usual, observed a swelling of the size of half a bean, on the inner and anterior surface of the tendo Achillis, which occasionally caused pain in walking. Half a year afterwards a similar swelling formed in the other tendo Achillis, at the same place: the tumours were situated about two inches above the os calcis. He applied a solution of the oxymuriate of mercury in alcohol, which produced soreness of the skin without making, at the same time, any

sensible impression upon the swellings, and then he thought no more about them; they still continue, but are something less in size; and although sensible, so as to be rather painful if pressed, they are otherwise without sensation."

Mr. Mayo's case differs somewhat from mine; the tumours would seem to be *on*, rather than *in*, or surrounding the substance of the tendo Achillis, and also to have succeeded violent exertion, neither of which was the case in my patients.

I cannot entirely divest my mind of an impression that these tumours are, in some way, connected with gouty action, yet I shall abstain from offering any hypothetical opinion about them. If any of your numerous readers have satisfied themselves upon the point by actual inspection, as men with superior advantages for studying morbid anatomy may well be supposed to have done, I should feel personally and particularly grateful for some enlightenment in regard to their nature and constitution, as also under what empirical treatment they may have been found to subside. There would almost seem to be something foreign and impertinent in crude speculation upon a point which may be so readily, and probably has been, determined in the dead-house or dissecting-room.

Trusting to your well-known liberality to publish this communication in the most suitable form, I have the honour, to be Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

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Taunton, Dec. 17th, 1838.

## HYDROCYANIC ACID IN GASTRO-ENTERITIS.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—I do not remember ever having observed, in any work, hydrocyanic acid recommended in peritoneal and gastro-enteric inflammation. Within the last few months I have been called upon to treat several cases of gastro-enteritis, and, after bleeding the patients as largely as I considered advisable, I began with, and repeated, doses of calomel and opium, at the same time administering two tablespoonfuls of the mist. salin. This treatment not mitigating that invariable symptom, the vomiting, I was induced to try the hydrocyanic acid, in small and repeated doses, and in every case, I am happy to say, with decided advantage.

The first two or three doses were generally vomited, but a few subsequent doses commonly succeeded in lessening all the urgent symptoms, reducing the pulse, and so far allaying the irritability of the stomach as to enable it to retain a mixture containing liq. ammon. acet., digitalis, and antimony; and