THE DISCOVERY OF AN ANASTOMOSIS
BETWEEN THE
FOURTH AND FIFTH PAIRS OF
NERVES

NOT OF MODERN DATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On reading the letter addressed to you by Mr. S. W. Fearn, inserted in last week's LANCET under this important announcement, it occurred to me that I had read in a French work, published fourteen years ago, an account and description of this identical discovery, and upon a perusal I find such to be the fact.

Permit me, through the medium of your valuable and interesting Journal, to introduce to the notice of Mr. Fearn a work with which he, of course, cannot be acquainted; he will therein find a description of this discovery in such words, that his own statement would make a literal translation of them; and he will also find the second sentence in the passage that I have transcribed, to contain the same sentiment as that in the concluding sentence of his own letter.

The work I quote from is entitled, *Traité des Maladies des Yeux—avec des planches coloriées, &c.* Par A. P. DEMOURS. Paris. 1818. This work is in 3 vols. 8vo., and 1 vol. 4to. of plates, with letter-press descriptions. The first plates are beautiful and very artist-like engravings of the anatomy of the eye, copied from Soemmering, with some omissions and additions.

Now, Sir, if Mr. Fearn will turn to fig. 1, plate 6, and to page 31 of the descriptions, he will see delineated, and may read the description of, this anastomosis. The words are as follows:—

“4. Quatrième nerf du cerveau. Il passe près du cinquième, et du nerf optique; et, grossi d'un filet remarquable de la première branche du cinquième nerf, il se répand dans le muscle oblique supérieur. Je ne me rappelle point avoir jamais vu représenté ce phénomène du quatrième nerf, auquel vient se joindre un filet du cinquième nerf. Je conserve soigneusement dans l'esprit-de-vin la pièce qui a servi de modèle.”

M. Demours gives no other description, but the plate shows that the anastomosis takes place midway between the plexiform tubercle of the fifth pair of nerves and the orbit, where the first branch of the fifth enters, thus proving the identity of the two discoveries. To all attentive readers of this very able work of M. Demours, the discovery claimed by Mr. Fearn must be well

known, and I doubt not that gentleman will be obliged by this communication, which will necessarily reach him, should you honour it with a place in your LANCET.

Is it necessary for me to add, that I have made these observations for the sole purpose of correcting an evident misconception, and that nothing is further from my thoughts than to detract from the merits of Mr. Fearn's anatomical demonstration? I have the honour to be, Mr. Editor, your most obedient servant,

J. B. SHARPE, M.R.C.S.
Great Cloisters, Windsor Castle,
March 11, 1832.

[The anastomosis alluded to has been described by other continental authors as well as Demours, but it has not been noticed by any of the writers of this country; it is, therefore, extremely probable, that Mr. Fearn discovered this small branch without having been aware that another anatomist had seen it before him. Mickel does not think that this filament is constantly found; his words are, “S'y anastomose ordinairement avec la première branche du nerf trijumeau, par le moyen d'un petit filet.”—Ed. L.]

CASE OF
MALIGNANT CHOLERA
IN THE MILE-END ROAD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case of cholera occurred on the 4th inst., and being the first which has appeared in this parish, it has occasioned much discussion, and the medical men are as usual divided in their opinions about it. Under these circumstances I am induced to transmit a brief account for insertion in THE LANCET, and you will oblige me by placing it in an early number, for I feel that it is of the utmost consequence that every degree of publicity should be given to cases which evince a decided character, in order to undeceive those who have been lulled into a dangerous sense of security by the positive denials of the anti-cholericists. It is indeed painful to witness so much party-spirit upon a subject of this nature. A rapidly-fatal malady is undoubtedly prevalent at the present moment in this city, and whether it be a new disease, or a malignant form of an old one, contagious or not contagious, still it requires the most vigorous measures and the greatest unanimity