ON FOREIGN BODIES IN THE ŒSOPHAGUS.

By RICHARD GORST, Esq., M.R.C.S., Rock Ferry.

ON the evening of Tuesday, the 26th of August, I was summoned in great haste to attend a servant girl, who had, whilst engaged in placing clothes on a line, allowed, as she imagined, a pin to enter the œsophagus, giving rise to great pain, particularly at the time of swallowing.

It appears that the girl was in the act of placing clothes on a line, and that before doing so she had procured from her mistress a quantity of pins, which she at once placed in her mouth, intending to remove them as required. The night being very stormy, and the clothes-line high, she had not used more than four pins, when she felt one fall into her throat, and at once she spit the remainder out on the grass, believing these to be all, except the one in her throat.

The examination I made of her throat, to ascertain if possible the exact position of the foreign body, excited rather violent vomiting, and with the ejected matters were discharged two pins of large size, the removal of which very much increased the pain at the time, causing a sensation of tearing, which, however, soon subsided. At night she had two grains of Dover's powder, but did not sleep.

On the following morning (27th) she complained of great pain in the throat, particularly in swallowing, and also on pressure on either side of the trachea; during the day she had a severe rigor, followed by quick pulse, pain in the head, and great thirst; by night, the pain in the throat had greatly increased, also the difficulty of swallowing; to use her own expression, there was constant linking in the throat.

Aug. 28th.—Had not slept during the night, owing to the pain and difficulty in swallowing; the pulse 110; breath very offensive; great tenderness on pressure; neck much swollen, and occasionally spasm of the sterno-mastoid, causing very great pain; she still complains of the linking; by night, the symptoms generally had become more aggravated, and it was obvious that matter had formed; to relieve the spasms of the muscles of the throat I prescribed the local application of laudanum, over which was placed a warm poultice.

29th.—Shortly before my visit the abscess had burst, and discharged a quantity of foetid matter, with which was a third pin. This produced some relief, but not the marked abatement of symptoms that was expected; the breath continued very offensive, and the pain in swallowing very great; the spasms also continued; and by evening her condition was similar to that of the previous day.

Soon after daylight on the Saturday morning, a second abscess discharged the same offensive matter as yesterday, and with it was ejected a fourth pin. This gave great relief, and by night there was a manifest improvement of all the symptoms: she could now take arrow-root with little inconvenience or pain, expressed herself as much better, and the swelling and tenderness in the throat had greatly subsided. At intervals during the day she had hawked up purulent matter, mixed or streaked with blood. On the following morning, (Sunday,) when preparing to take some simple form of food, she fancied she could feel a foreign body in her œsophagus; and after hawking and coughing for some time, she succeeded in bringing up two pins, without occasioning the least pain. (I may here remark, that when these last pins were ejected, the daughter of the person with whom she resided was present.) On the Tuesday the pain increased considerably; and on Wednesday evening a third abscess discharged, the matter mixed with blood, very offensive, and with it were two other pins. No other abscess formed.

From this date to Sept. 7th she continued to eject from her throat, at intervals, pins, eight in number, making a total of sixteen. It was not until Sept. 5th that I directed any search to be made in the evacuations from the bowels, to ascertain if any of the foreign bodies had made their transit. I then arranged that the evacuations should be carefully examined daily, to be conducted without the patient's knowledge. Aperient medicine was administered in a mild form, and for two days the motions were quite free, but subsequently to this, for several days successively, pins were found in almost every evacuation, and numbered in all eleven, which were passed without producing any pain, and quite unknown to the girl.

The case offers several particulars of interest, and I believe it is the only one recorded where so great a number of pins have been lodged in the human frame at one time. The succession of abscesses that formed and discharged, together with the pins found in the evacuations, must overthrow all suspi-

cion of the case being one of feigned disease, particularly as the examination of the matters passed from the bowels was conducted entirely unknown to the girl. She is twenty-four years of age, has always been a valued servant, and in no instance, so far as I can trace, has she showed any symptoms of hysteria. Her health suffered very much for a time, but she is now quite well.

Rock Ferry, Jan. 1851.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE TREATMENT OF SOME INTRACTABLE DISEASES OF THE SKIN, AS PURSUED IN THE PARISIAN HOSPITALS.

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THE success I have witnessed in the treatment of several intractable disorders of the skin in the Hospital of St. Louis, and chiefly in the service of M. Devergié, leads me to offer the few following observations, in the hope of directing attention to the employment of certain remedies, admirably adapted, as the success I have observed proves, in the treatment of such cases.

1. *Eczema Impétigineux: its Treatment.*—The association of eczema and impetigo gives rise to a very common and to a very obstinate form of disease. This complex disorder represents, in its earliest appearance, the characteristic features of the primitive eruptions of which it is composed—a greater or less number of pustules, such as those which occur in impetigo vulgaris, being mingled with the vesicles of eczema. At that, the early stage of the disease, the differential diagnosis between the compound eruption and either of those primitive forms of which it is composed, is easy. At a later period we possess another distinguishing feature in the formation of dense crusts after the rupture of the pustules, showing that the exudation which had originally taken place was more than pure serum—the characteristic of simple eczema. This is the affection which Bateman makes his second head of eczema, and calls E. impetiginodes. All, I apprehend, will be ready to acknowledge the frequent and great difficulty experienced in effecting a cure in this affection, which too often merits the appellation of inveterate. The plan of treatment I have seen adopted by M. Devergié in the treatment of this disease is not less simple than efficacious: it consists in the application to the affected part of the oil of cade. This oil of cade is a pyrogenic oil, prepared by the distillation of the trunk and larger branches of the old juniper. The oil itself has a rather pleasant pungent odour, a dark-brown colour, and somewhat thick consistence. M. Devergié thus employs it: he paints it over the diseased skin with a brush, and then, with a dry, but soft brush, rubs it in. Its application he repeats every three or four days, but not every day, as some recommend. The latter M. Devergié regards as a bad practice sufficient to account for failures in cure by the oil. This constitutes in most cases the entire treatment; for while, in all cases, the regulation of the bowels and the employment of a light and non-stimulating diet are enjoined, in few is any internal remedy of importance administered. The oil of cade is much used in Paris as an external medication in skin diseases, chiefly in vesicular and papular eruptions; the case of eczema impétigineux, however, M. Devergié regards as the one, *par excellence*, for its employment. The measure of success I have seen to follow cases so treated, certainly entitles the remedy to the high character M. Devergié has assigned it. I have seen a large number of cases so treated; the employment of the remedy, in most, has extended over a period of weeks, but in all, without exception, the results obtained have been most satisfactory. Lately a cure was effected by the employment of the oil of cade in a case of eczema impétigineux, in which the crusts assumed the nummular form; hence called by M. Devergié, E. I. nummulaires—a form of the disease hitherto undescribed by authors, and most difficult to cure. I have noticed, in regard to the action of the oil in the case of eczema impétigineux, that it is the pustular development which is first arrested and overcome, in many instances, the case being reduced from a complex eruption of pustules and vesicles to a simply vesicular one, before a cure took place. This would tend to prove, that in simple impetigo and in ecthyma the oil of cade may prove a useful remedy; in these cases I have not as yet had proof of its efficiency.

(To be continued.)

Paris, March, 1851.