was observed, and much serum ran out. The coronal suture appeared to have been forced open, and, about three inches before its termination on the left side, a fracture was discovered extending from it backwards about an inch into the parietal bone, then downwards into the squamous suture; the fractured portion was not depressed. Having removed the skull-cap, two immense coagula presented themselves, which had arisen from the arteria meningea media, this vessel having been divided by the fracture. Beneath the dura mater more extravasation had taken place, indeed the convolutions of the brain were separated from each other by large streaks of blood. Some dark-coloured fluid was found in the lateral ventricles. I am, Sir, yours,

L. O. Fox.

September 20.

THE SEXUAL FUNCTION OF THE CEREBELLUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On reading Mr. Lambert's letter in THE LANCET of Saturday (page 808, last vol.), "On the Effects of Hanging on the Male and Female Organs of Secretion," it appeared to me (from evidence which I shall adduce in this communication) that all *phenomena* connected with the organs of generation, might be comprehended and explained by attending to the following considerations: viz., that the *penis* and *uterus* are only the instruments of the sexual sensation, while the seat of the sensation is in the cerebellum, in the same manner that the eye is the instrument of vision, but that the sensation or capacity to see depends on the optic nerve.

That the cerebellum is the amative organ, is to be verified by a vast number of facts, and these facts may be further verified by experiment.

First, then, it is a general rule throughout the animal kingdom that there is stronger sexual feeling in males of all animals and in man, than there is in females and in women; and the *cerebelli* of the former are larger than in the latter.

Secondly, in the breeding seasons all animals have great heat at the occipital region (indicating great irritability); and also at the period of puberty in our species this has been observed. Besides, it is to be observed that in youth, during this change, there are certain effects which are inexplicable on any physiological principle if we reject the fact that the cerebellum is the seat of the *amative propensity*; for instance, discordance in the voice of the embryo man; and, besides the

uterine irritation in the budding woman, there is sometimes a choking sensation in the throat, called *globus hystericus*; the most intense cases of both these kinds are invariably dependent on large and highly irritable *cerebelli*, the change being in less excitable temperaments unattended by any strong symptoms of the kind. It is almost needless to add that the vocal nerves originate near the cerebellum, and when this organ is under extraordinary excitement (as at the period of puberty) the neighbouring parts (and the nerves which emanate from them) are also liable to be affected with extra excitement from sympathy.

Thirdly, it is proved that a *castrata* is liable to periodical excitement of the sexual feeling, but from the instrument being defective, the sensation cannot be gratified in the usual manner. I have been also informed by breeders of dogs, that a *spayed* bitch has a particular excitement or periodicity, just as if the operation which is intended to destroy the sensation had not been performed.

These prefatory remarks enable me to corroborate Mr. Lambert's assertion, "that in hanging there is penal erection in the male sex, &c.," and I may add that there is menstrual discharge in the female under similar circumstances. The following case will in some measure illustrate both views. It was related to me by Dr. Travis, of Scarborough, during the time I lectured there on phrenology, in 1827.

"Some few years past an Italian *castrata* singer at the opera was found suspended by the bedstead, and when a surgeon was called in the man was dead, although (as stated by the landlady of the house) he had hung himself unintentionally. The facts of the transaction were thus stated by this woman to the jury summoned to sit on the body; she said 'that the deceased had informed her (when he came to lodge at her house) that he had been deprived in the most barbarous manner of certain essential parts for sexual gratification, but that at certain times he experienced a very powerful desire, and that he had accidentally discovered that by partially hanging himself he allayed the desire, and had certain delightful sensations,' and she assured the jury that she had been in the habit of cutting him down on many occasions; and that during his last *pleasurable suspension* she heard a rapping at her street-door, and ran down to answer it, but although she returned as quickly as possible, the gentleman's life was gone, &c."

"The jury, struck with these novel details, inquired of the medical gentlemen present, if such effects could take place from partial strangulation, to which they replied in the affirmative, owing to the fact that all executed criminals had priapism and emission,

and that it was possible in the case of a *castrata*."

In this instance we find that the medical evidence answered the question without any hesitation, because from their own knowledge of what takes place in hanging, they made no doubt that as the laws of nature are uniform, no exceptions would be made whether a man was hung without his consent, or whether he chose it by way of relaxation! But had they inquired into the cause, it would have been found that the phenomenon could be traced to the stimulating effect of the blood determined to the cerebellum (the organ of the sexual feeling). Now if the *castrata* was acquainted with this new pleasure, we do not suppose that any criminal at the awful period of preparation for his death thinks of sexual intercourse; and yet the fact is one highly valuable in a medical and moral point of view, for it is obvious that all things which will determine the blood to the head, and of course to the cerebellum, may produce an involuntary excitement of the amative feeling; hence drink, food, &c., and strangulation, will also produce it.

I lately witnessed this at Doncaster, in company with most of the intelligent medical gentlemen of that town: the case was that of a man who had been committed to the jail on a charge of rape on two children, but on the morning on which the prisoner was to be examined, he took the liberty of hanging himself, and died with *penal erection* and emission. I afterwards dissected his brain *à la Gall et Spurzheim*, and pointed out that the vessels of the cerebellum were injected with florid blood, and which I had no doubt had existed prior to his death, and might be deemed some proof of the diseased and over-excited state of the amative organ. I should have stated that the jugular veins were opened as soon as he was found suspended, and that in less than one quarter of an hour after the act of suicide, so that the florid appearance of the vessels of the cerebellum could not be referred to the congestion which takes place in strangulation or suffocation, the blood being then of a dark venous kind, whilst the appearance of the blood in the vessels, as before-mentioned, was of that bright arterial kind observed in incipient inflammation.

Much time as I have devoted to the above considerations, yet I cannot resist the desire of mentioning a case of precocity of the sexual desire, which must convince every ingenuous mind that phrenologists are not speculative in their observations on the functions of the cerebellum.

During the time my honoured friend Dr. Spurzheim was lecturing in Hull, we took the cast of a girl four years old, who exhibited strong symptoms of the amative pro-

pensity, I cannot exactly say whether she had menstruated, but I believe something was said about it; nevertheless her cerebellum is of the adult size; and this is invariably the case in those premature cases which I have seen in both sexes. Those who deny the phrenological data should furnish us with some physiological reasons for these extreme efforts of nature; the time is past when we can shrug up our shoulders, and with mysterious look and corrugated forehead, pronounce a thing "very curious!" I have a cast of the girl, which I will show any professional gentleman, and he will immediately perceive that with a small infantile cerebrum there is the cerebellum of a woman.

I will conclude with what might be termed a synthetical proof of the functions of the cerebellum, and at the same time show the valuable adjunct which phrenology will prove to the medical philosopher, because of its practical application.

Having seen a case of *nymphomania* at the establishment of a late valuable friend of mine, I ventured to suggest to him that if the phrenological observations on the functions of the cerebellum be true, by applying cold applications to the back of the head (the head being shaved first as a matter of course), the vessels of the organ being suddenly emptied would cease to be in such a preternatural state of irritability, &c. My friend, a physician of eminence and a man of science, tried the experiment, for he was one of those talented men who adopted, without dread of its novelty, whatever was likely to mitigate the sum of human suffering, and he assured me that the application was strikingly effective. Heretofore the *labia*, &c., were bathed by the nurse, and the paroxysms lasted a very long time, but when cold lotions were applied to the cerebellum, the change to health was almost instantaneous.

I feel disposed to make an apology for the length of this communication; but knowing your readiness to receive information, I trust you will do me the honour of inserting it, and as soon as I can conveniently attend to it, I will remit to you some other illustrative cases. I am, Sir, with respectful esteem, your obedient servant,

J. L. LEVISON.

8, Gower Street North,
Sept. 1831.

HANGING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Give me leave to solve the enigma of an affection of the genital system consequent on the operation of hanging, by call-