education, poor-law reform, and main drainage might be instanced—which, if this opportunity is lost, may crowd out any legislation for the defective, perhaps for another generation; and what the supporters of the extension of this measure to Ireland feel is that, though the Bill may have its faults, it is far better than nothing, and that if this chance is lost there may not be another in our time. Meanwhile, hundreds of non-insane defectives are being left to drift into lives of degradation, crime, and disease, and are handing on their own defects, often in aggravated degree, to their hapless and too frequently illegitimate offspring, thus producing an ever increasing crop of degeneracy, and building up an ever increasing burden of expense to the community.

ART. VIII.—*A Case of Juvenile Tabes.** By T. GILLMAN MOORHEAD, M.D., F.R.C.P.I.; Physician, Royal City of Dublin Hospital.

THE following case of tabes dorsalis occurring in early life, and probably the result of inherited specific disease, is worthy of record, even though the term “juvenile tabes” may not be strictly applicable. In most cases of the juvenile type the first appearance of symptoms has taken place in childhood, but as far as the type of the disease is concerned the mere accident of commencing a few years earlier or later seems to make little difference.

CASE.—The patient, a girl, aged twenty-two, engaged in clerical work, was first seen in November, 1912, by Dr. R. de C. Wheeler, who diagnosticated the condition and sent her to me for observation in hospital. She had consulted Dr. Wheeler for pains in the legs, which she regarded as rheumatic in origin, and for unsteadiness in walking. These symptoms had first become noticeable about eight months previously, and had latterly become so troublesome that she had given up out-of-door exercise owing to her objection to being seen staggering about. No definite family history of

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specific disease could be obtained. Her mother is alive and well; her father died about ten years ago following an operation for amputation of the leg. The amputation was stated to have been performed owing to the existence of a chronic ulcerous condition of the ankle and leg. The patient has two brothers and one sister. The brothers are both younger than herself; one of them is subject to epilepsy, and the other has been troubled for years with a purulent nasal discharge. The sister older than the patient is in good health. The only member of the family whom I was able to see apart from the patient herself was the mother, and she professed entire ignorance when questioned on the possibility of either her husband or herself having had specific disease. She had had miscarriages, but was indefinite as to their number. Most careful inquiry into the personal history of the patient failed to elicit any fact that would suggest that she might have suffered from acquired syphilis. There was no history of illness in early life such as might suggest accidental infection, and as the hymen was intact at the time of examination a genital origin of the disease can almost certainly be excluded. The patient was most emphatic in her denial of the possibility of such an infection taking place. No signs of old congenital specific disease were observed, but unfortunately the upper front teeth had all been extracted, and so the possible sign in them was unavailable. A year before the pains and unsteadiness in gait were noticed there had been for a short time some incontinence of urine and slight difficulty in emptying the bladder. This was probably the first symptom of the disease, and occurred when the patient was twenty-one.

On examination in hospital the girl presented the typical phenomena of rather early tabes dorsalis. Her gait was decidedly ataxic, a marked Romberg sign was present, knee-jerks and ankle-jerks were completely absent, the Argyll-Robertson pupil was present, and the pains complained of were of a typical lightning character. Slight dulling of tactile sensibility was noticed in the lower third of both legs. There was no optic atrophy, and indeed no retinal change. No other abnormalities, visceral or otherwise, were detected. A lumbar puncture was refused, but a Wassermann blood test, carried out on two occasions, gave a full positive result. An intravenous injection of .4 gramme

salvarsan was given, and a fortnight subsequently the Wassermann test was negative. It has not since been tested. During the last few days gastric pain of the nature of gastric crises has been complained of.

While admitting that it is practically impossible to exclude with certainty the possibility of acquired syphilis in any given case, I feel that it is almost certainly excludable in this case. The presence of a full positive Wassermann test is of extreme interest. Very few patients who have suffered from congenital syphilis have had their blood subjected to this test in adult life, but as most infants born of syphilitic parents give a positive reaction in early life it is, I think, fully conceivable that congenital syphilis, mild, possibly latent, and certainly untreated, should give rise to a positive Wassermann test in adult life, and at the same time produce undoubted tabes dorsalis. Should, however, it be judged by others that the record of the case is in itself conclusive in favour of acquired syphilis, it is, I think, none the less of interest from its early development and from the sex of the patient.

ART. IX.—*Rheumatism in Children.** By J. H. CRANE, B.A., M.D., B.Ch., B.A.O. Univ. Dubl., Rossall School, Fleetwood, Lancashire.

SINCE starting practice I have had the care of several schools, consisting both of boys and girls, as well as hospital experience, and so have had ample opportunity of studying the various phases of rheumatism in children. There are few complaints more common and few more serious, and, in my opinion, it is the cause of a great majority of the heart troubles one meets with in adult life, owing to neglect in childhood. It is a disease about which we, as doctors, cannot be too careful and in relation to which our responsibility is very great, considering the serious harm that may be done to the heart, if overlooked

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