

EPILEPSY FROM VENERY.

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To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As a constant reader of your valuable Journal I cannot avoid making an observation upon a subject adverted to in a late lecture by Dr. Thomson of the London University. In speaking of the causes of epilepsy, I am surprised to find no allusion made by him to *indulgence in venery*, in my humble opinion the most fruitful source of this often intractable malady. Out of seven cases which have lately come under my care, six were decidedly owing to venereal excitement. I will allude to two of them only.

A gentleman, aged 41, having fallen down in a fit, was brought into my house for assistance. The manner of his wife, who was with him, not being so kind as would be expected under the circumstances, I expressed my surprise, when she informed me that it was "his own fault," and related sufficient to satisfy me as to the cause of the epilepsy. This gentleman's health was completely re-established by a voyage to America, leaving his wife in England.

The second case, I shall notice was one of a rather different character. The patient, aged 25 years, had for eighteen months been desponding and low-spirited, manifesting a peculiar aversion towards every person who wished to alleviate his sufferings, especially his mother, sisters, &c. Twice or three times a week, or oftener, he was attacked with a fit, which continued from ten minutes to half an hour, or more, and left the mind wandering for some time after. The appetite was *voracious*, and the pulse quick and hard, with an unusual degree of heat and pain about the head, chiefly referred to the occiput. Having made strict inquiries as to his habits, his friends informed me that he was remarkably sober and steady; but not being satisfied with this report, I expressed my suspicion to a brother who slept in the same room with him, and wished that he should be narrowly watched. The result was as I had anticipated. He was detected, and confessed that he had for a long time past indulged, in a habit which is destructive of both mental and bodily health. That this was the cause of his illness and epilepsy does not admit of a doubt, since the only mode of treatment that was adopted was counter-irritation to the part affected. A diet consisting principally of fish and farinaceous food, with constant employment in business from morning till night, where he

was always under the eye of an active manager, had before the expiration of six weeks thoroughly established his health, which from that period until now has not been interrupted.

I trust that these remarks will tend to direct attention to a more correct view both of the pathology of epilepsy and its treatment.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRANCIS EAGLE.

29, Poultry, March 25, 1835.

DANGER OF LARGE BLEEDING IN CHOLERA.

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To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I lately saw a case of cholera that strongly impressed on me the great caution with which blood should be abstracted in that fatal disease, and I therefore transmit an outline of it, for insertion in your journal.

A girl, aged 25, of delicate constitution, had had diarrhoea for two days, and at 10 a.m. of the third, was suddenly seized with violent spasms of the abdominal muscles and legs, with excessive restlessness, frequent vomiting, small feeble pulse, and other of the symptoms, except much purging, which are common to cholera previous to the occurrence of severe collapse. Fifteen ounces of blood having been abstracted, the pulse gained strength and fulness, the cramps became much less severe, and the countenance assumed a less anxious expression. Heat was applied to the surface of the body, and calomel and ext. hyosciami, five grains of each, were ordered to be taken every hour; and when I left her at noon, the symptoms had become so favourable that I was confident that this was one of those cases in which remedial means are happily successful. On seeing her two hours afterwards, I found that *blood had escaped from the arm to a very considerable amount*, and had produced a melancholy change; for the pulse was now very small and weak, the face was livid, the eyes and cheeks were sunken, and the breath and the tip of the tongue were cold. Irritation was excited on the legs, calomel and hyosciamus were continued, and the vomiting was allayed by effervescing draughts, but she sunk eighteen hours after the first attack of severe cramp.

The fatal termination of this case may fairly be attributed to the excessive collapse produced by the loss of blood during my absence. When I opened a vein,