

tions, and sometimes succeeds in stammering a word.

16. For the last three days he has evidently been losing ground; more lethargic than before; is quite conscious when spoken to; sleeps constantly; no stertor; pulse 40, and weak; discharge from the wound scanty,—towards evening it was observed trickling down his cheeks, and when the poultice was removed it was seen welling up from the wound in great quantity. This increase of discharge was attended with marked improvement in the symptoms; the pulse became more frequent, and the countenance more intelligent and lively. It appeared to me that the matter must have been pressing upon the brain and aggravating the symptoms since the 10th. His present improvement he probably owes to its having since fortunately made its way out through the wound.

18. Not so well as at last report; he is weak, irritable, and listless; discharge from wound scanty. Blister to the back of the head.

20. Discharge from wound abundant; his state is much improved; appears to be slowly regaining his power of speech; all traces of paralysis of the face and tongue have vanished; the wound is healing; pulse 66, natural.

Dec. 4. Our patient has continued to improve since the last report; so much so as to warrant his discharge from the hospital on this day. He gradually regained his powers of speech, though he finds a difficulty still in pronouncing some words. All his faculties seem to be now in full vigour; he is a remarkably intelligent boy. The wound has healed, except at one point, where apparently a small exfoliation of bone is about to take place.

18. He has walked several times to my house, a distance of about a mile. Appears to enjoy perfect health. A small exfoliation of bone has taken place, which will probably be followed by another.

CASE OF
FACIAL NEURALGIA
SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY
ACONITINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I should feel obliged by the insertion of the following case in the pages of THE LANCET, from the fact of its having resisted the whole class of remedies that are generally employed in neuralgic affections, and from its exhibiting, in a remarkable degree, the beneficial effect of aconitina in nervous diseases. Should further experience confirm our opinion respecting the use of that remedy, it will prove a valuable addi-

tion to the materia medica. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. P. BROOKES, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.
Resident Surgeon to the Cheltenham
General Hospital.

December, 1843.

June 1842. Miss —, æt. 17, of nervous, hysterical temperament, has for some months been troubled with severe paroxysms of pain affecting the left side of the face. At the present time she complains of pain extending over the whole of the left side of the face, commencing just below the orbit, and reaching to the alæ of the nose and upper lip. The left side of the lip is much drawn up. The pain is not accompanied with the slightest permanent discoloration of the skin; but at the commencement of each paroxysm the skin of the affected side becomes white, whilst that on the other side of the face retains its natural colour. This blanching of the skin is accompanied with a sensation, as of cold water trickling down the cheek; the pulse at such periods is slightly intermittent. Even slight pressure with the finger gives her excessive pain, and there exists some tumefaction of the affected side. Sometimes she experiences several paroxysms during the day, but at other times an interval of a week or more may intervene between their occurrence. They are sure to make their appearance on her taking the slightest cold. When they occur in their greatest intensity she generally becomes hysterical, and rigidity of the neck and arms ensues. During these paroxysms she abstains from speaking or eating solid food, as both actions cause considerable pain. The functions of the digestive organs do not appear deranged, and the general health is as good as usual. The symptoms cannot be traced to any affection of the brain.

Belladonna, veratrine, strychnine, and iodine, were all tried without affording relief. A blister to the back of the neck gave some temporary ease, but after a few hours the symptoms returned with their original severity. Quinine and almost all the remedies usually employed in nervous affections, were internally exhibited without benefit. It was at last determined to use aconitine, and the following formula was employed:—

R *Aconitine*, two grains,

Rectified spirit of wine, as much as sufficient to mix it with two drachms of lard for an ointment. A piece, the size of a pea, to be rubbed into the face on the access of the pain. The application of the ointment caused what she termed a twitching, stinging sensation of the skin, and after a few trials the paroxysms became diminished, both in their frequency and severity. The aconitine was used six times or oftener, daily, during nearly three weeks, with marked benefit, and continued for some time afterwards, longer intervals being gradually

allowed to elapse between each application. The pain, from the period of commencing its use, progressively diminished, and has now nearly ceased, only appearing on her taking cold. On visiting her the other day, she informed me that she had not had an attack for more than three months; and that when the pain did come on, she had recourse to the ointment, which afforded immediate relief.

Remarks.—We generally find that neuralgia occurs in parts covered with dense fascia, and the disease has been supposed by some authors to be an inflamed state of such membrane, or of the periosteum covering the bone of the affected part. If such were the case, should we not expect benefit from the use of counter-irritants and local depletion? But these remedies frequently aggravate instead of diminishing the pain. To constitute true "tic douloureux" the pain must be confined to a certain part of the face—that to which the branches of the fifth nerve are distributed. The turgescence of the face in the case reported above, amounted sometimes very nearly to a species of inflammation, but was not marked by true inflammatory symptoms. When the acute pain ceased, the soreness of the skin rather increased; and the latter will frequently remain after the restoration of the patient to comparative health. The aconitine must be persevered in until all soreness disappears. The sensation of water trickling down the face, and the intermittence of the pulse, were the sure precursors of the paroxysms, and I am inclined to consider them as a cold stage of the disease. Though for the most part met with in the opulent, the disease, if watched for, is to be observed in the poorer classes, who generally term the disease "rheumatism in the face," and seldom apply for relief to medical men.

TRANSCENDENTAL ANATOMY.

STRICTURES OF

PROFESSOR VALENTIN

ON THE

VIEWS OF DR. MARTIN BARRY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There appeared in *THE LANCET* for October 1, 1842 (page 35), under the head of "Discoveries in Embryology," a series of extracts from Professor Valentin's "Repertorium," tending to give support to the theories of Dr. Martin Barry. Your non-German readers, Sir, may suppose that Valentin's ideas on the subject are the same now as then, and thereby do great wrong to that eminent man, whose more mature and well-considered opinions are somewhat pithily expressed in the following extracts from Part I. of the "Repertorium" for 1843, to which, I trust, in justice to the professor,

you will give insertion. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

ANTI-SPIRAL.

December, 1843.

"Barry imagines he has discovered a new, universal, fundamental law of structure. According to him, there exist in animals primary and secondary fibres and filaments, which twist about with a spiral course. According to this view, parts (e. g., the blood corpuscles), in which nobody ever saw a fibre, do, in reality, contain them. Well known as it may be, however, that many fibres of human and animal structures are disposed screw-wise, yet the views of this author bear far too much the stamp of a lively fancy, and plainly show that his eyes, assisted by very high powers, believed they saw many things, which, in accordance with preconceived theories, they ought to have seen. To favour these views many notions, long since become matters of history, have been anew raised up."—P. 6.

"The work of the first (Bischoff) which has been already published, treats particularly of the ovum of the rabbit, including, however, that of other animals, and contains a valuable collection of researches on the delicate subject of the first development of the mammiferæ. More especially does it tend to give to the researches of Barry, of which we have treated in the last number of the "Repertorium," the appearance rather of offsprings of a fertile fancy than that of results of cool observation. Involuntarily does the idea force itself upon us, that the English investigator, led away by many theoretical views,—for example, upon the division of the nucleus, and new cell-formation round it, upon the process of endogenous cell-formation, and especially by new cell-theories,—believed that he really saw what, according to his views, ought to exist."—P. 17.

CEREBRAL MISGROWTHS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some weeks ago (page 184) a communication from the pen of Mr. Barker, of Northwich, was inserted in *THE LANCET* relative to the case of a child said to have been born with a double brain. At the time of reading the letter I was forcibly reminded of a case which occurred in my own practice about twelve months ago. Mine was a fine instance of *hernia cerebri*, and I have little doubt, from the situation of the tumour, and from the manner in which the cerebral mass protruded from the cranial cavity in Mr. Barker's case, that that also was an instance of the same disease. Perhaps Mr. Barker will have the kindness to inform me, and your readers generally, if the protruded portion of brain contained separate