

TRAUMATIC TETANUS TREATED BY THE TINCTURE OF THE CALABAR BEAN.

By C. V. RIDOUT, M.R.C.S.

MR. L—, a farm bailiff, aged forty-seven, of good constitution and temperate habits, when returning home on the evening of April 29th, was thrown from his horse in consequence of the animal shying, and fell upon his hands. When I saw him I found him suffering from a compound dislocation of the first phalanx of the left thumb, with extensive injury of the ligaments and muscles of the right wrist, but without fracture. There was also a simple dislocation of the first phalanx of the right fourth finger backwards, and a slight wound over the right eyebrow, but without any symptom of concussion or other injury of the head. The dislocations were reduced with some difficulty, owing to the nervous temperament of the patient; but he progressed favourably till May 12th, when some threatenings of tetanus were observed in the form of pain and stiffness at the back of the neck. These symptoms increased till on the 17th May the jaw was firmly fixed; the teeth could not be separated more than a quarter of an inch, and the patient could only swallow liquids from a spoon. There were occasional twitches of the face, clenching of the hands, and great restlessness.

May 18th.—Mr. S. Lane, of St. Mary's Hospital, saw the patient with me in consultation, and recommended a trial of the extract of Calabar bean, as recently advocated by Dr. Eben. Watson, of Edinburgh. A solution was made by rubbing down eight grains of the extract in an ounce of spirits of wine, of which ten minims, equivalent to one-sixth of a grain of the extract, were given every hour.

19th.—Has passed a quieter night, and slept twice for two hours; pulse 80, regular; can speak distinctly, but cannot open his mouth wider than yesterday; complains of pain in the back; wound in the thumb looking well.

20th.—Symptoms much the same; takes nourishment freely, but has some difficulty in swallowing; pulse 80; bowels relieved.

21st.—Two A.M.: I was sent for to see him, and found him unable to lie down from a sense of suffocation; had twitching in the throat, and the risus sardonicus was well marked; pulse 100. Increased the dose of Calabar bean to fifteen minims every hour. Bowels open; urine passes freely.—Eight P.M.: Pulse down to 80; has had some sleep, but the twitchings continue; has found relief from a bladder of ice applied to the back of the neck.

22nd.—Seven A.M.: Has passed a better night; twitchings less, but is still afraid to lie down. Dose of Calabar bean increased to twenty minims (one-third of a grain of the extract) every hour.—Eight P.M.: Twitchings and sense of suffocation relieved; has been able to lie down and sleep for an hour. The same dose to be continued every two hours during the night; ice-bladder continued.

23rd.—Tetanic symptoms decidedly less, but there is a good deal of mucous expectoration. Same dose of the bean continued.

24th to 29th.—Suffered from occasional paroxysms of spasm, but with no material aggravation or mitigation of the symptoms.

26th.—The dose was increased to thirty minims (half a grain of the extract); nourishment taken freely; pulse not more than 80 at any time.

29th.—Had a severe seizure at two P.M.; teeth firmly clenched, with cramps of hands and feet. Dose increased to forty minims (two-thirds of a grain of the extract).

30th.—Passed a good night; spasms subsided; suffers much from cough and expectoration; is decidedly weaker; bowels acted twice involuntarily; pulse 120.

31st.—Had more difficulty in swallowing during the night, apparently from the accumulation of mucus; was seized with convulsions and choking at five A.M., and died two hours afterwards.

The Calabar bean was tried in this case in consequence of the very successful results obtained from its use by Dr. Eben. Watson, as recorded in THE LANCET for April 4th and 11th, 1868. Dr. Watson there mentions six instances in which it was employed, and in five of these recovery took place. I much regret that this case cannot be added to the list of its

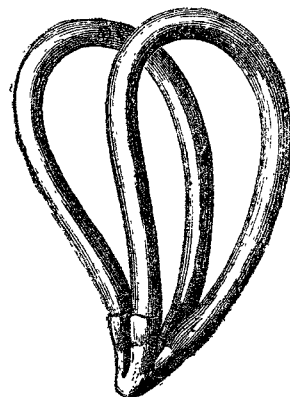
successes, although it had a fair trial, and the doses given were considerable. It appeared to retard the progress of the case and to mitigate the severity of the symptoms, but never completely to control them.

Egham, July, 1868.

A SPRING PESSARY FOR THE RELIEF OF RETROVERSION AND RETROFLEXION OF THE UTERUS BY ACTIVE EXTRA-UTERINE SUPPORT.

By WILLIAM MURRAY, M.D., M.R.C.P. LOND.

THE pessary I have had made for the above displacement of the uterus is a modification of a more simple instrument largely used by Sir James Simpson. My instrument possesses the very important advantage of affording active support to the body of a retroverted uterus, so as to lift it into the erect position. It does this by the opening of its blades by a spring at its point, so that as the upper blade rises from the lower it carries the uterus with it. The instrument is made of steel wire (pianoforte wire is the best), coated with gutta-percha, or run through a piece of india-rubber tubing, and bent anteriorly as it turns from the upper to the lower blade, so as to possess a spring powerful enough to open its blades with more or less force. It is evident that we have here an advantage essential to the relief of persistent retroversion—viz., an active supporting power which shall do something more than bear the weight of the uterus, by interposing between it and parts able to bear its weight. We lift and maintain the organ in its place by active and yielding pressure—i. e., by an elastic support.



Having used this pessary in several very difficult cases with complete success, I can now speak confidently of its efficacy and safety. When covered with the india-rubber tubing, the supporting surface is soft and cushion-like; but when covered with the gutta-percha, it gives a firmer and more powerful support: the former is adapted to a tender and irritable uterus; the latter to the organ in a less sensitive state. Specimens with the india-rubber coating may be had of Messrs. Weiss; and those covered by gutta-percha are made by Mr. Coxeter.

Clayton-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1868.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The Council of this institution announce that there are two subjects for the Jacksonian prizes of 20 guineas each, for competition among the members of the College for the present year, the first being "Pyæmia, after Injuries and Operations; its Pathology, Causes, Symptoms, Prevention, and Treatment." The subject for the second prize is "Amputations of the Limbs, the various Modes of Operation now practised, their relative Advantages, and the Methods of arresting Primary Hæmorrhage, &c." The Collegial Triennial Prize is the "John Hunter" medal, executed in gold, of the value of 50 guineas, or, at the option of the successful author of the dissertation, of the said medal executed in bronze, with an honorarium of £50. The subject for this prize is the "Anatomy and Physiology of the Organs of Taste and Smell in the Mammalia." During the past collegiate year the Council expended in prizes and lectures for the members, £214 10s.