

With sheep's pericardium, and after twenty-four hours' diffusion, the diffusate from the white of egg contained 2·8 grains of albumen, the contents of the funnel yielding 26·4 grains. Under similar circumstances, the serum of recently-drawn sheep's blood gave 1·3 grains in the diffusate, and 16·9 grains were obtained from the funnel.

With bullock's pericardium, and after three days' diffusion, the white of egg furnished 3·9 grains of albumen in the diffusate, 22·2 grains in the funnel; the serum of recently-drawn bullock's blood, 1·1 grain in the diffusate, 29·1 in the funnel; and the serum and corpuscles (the fibrin having been removed by whipping) of the same blood, 4·3 grains in the diffusate, and 41·3 grains in the funnel. In the latter instance the diffusate was of a strong red colour, but at the same time perfectly bright and clear.

Although there was a marked difference, especially in the latter series of results, in the amount of albumen diffused, yet I do not by any means advance what has been noticed as sufficiently decided at present to afford the satisfaction required in reference to the important question that has been raised. Still the experiments may be taken as showing that there is a difference in the diffusibility of different forms of albumen. There is sufficient in the results to induce me to purpose repeating the experiments, using much larger quantities, and diffusing through a much greater extent of surface, and at the same time seeing that all the albumen employed is accounted for in the diffusate and the contents of the funnel, or that there is no source of fallacy in the mode of procedure adopted. Looking at the position of the kidney, I cannot help regarding it mainly in the light of a dialysing apparatus upon an exceedingly extensive scale, and I search amongst physical laws to account for the phenomena observed.

ON A CASE OF MORAL INSANITY IN A CHILD.

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In November, 1861, I was requested by Dr. Welch, of the Hackney-road, to give my opinion in the following case:—

G. W. H.—, aged six, a well-grown, healthy, intelligent-looking boy; fair complexion; head large and broad across the ears; full blue eyes; expression heavy and sullen. He was born in September, 1855, and was considered a fine child. His mother, being in delicate health from consumption, was unable to suckle him. He was therefore brought up by hand, and fed chiefly on milk and tops-and-bottoms. Upon this he appeared to thrive. When, however, he began to walk, he showed symptoms of defective nutrition by his legs becoming bandy. This under proper treatment quite disappeared. In other respects he grew a healthy child. At a very early period he exhibited so much violence of temper when he could not get his own way, that it generally ended in a kind of convulsive seizure, one of which was so severe, when about eighteen months old, that his father for some minutes thought him dead. When three years old his mother died, and he fell ill with wasting and cough, for which he was under treatment at the London Hospital for about seven months, and there the violence of his temper was such as to attract the attention of the physician. His health became completely established after an attack of scald head. He always evinced a dislike to being petted or fondled, any attempt of the kind on the part of his little brother or sister being repulsed with a kick, a slap, or a blow on the face, so severe as generally to bring blood. If his father attempts to caress him, he will call him a fool, and resist. Toys, sweets, amusements, and such things as usually afford gratification to children, do not give him the slightest pleasure. Six months after his mother's death, his father married again; and about this time he began to use vile language, calling his step-mother, amongst other epithets, a b—y stinking b—h, and is often grossly indecent to her. He swears and tells most audacious lies, occasionally screams at the top of his voice if he wants anything, or to make the neighbours believe he is being beaten. Soon after his half-sister was born, and whilst lying in the cradle, he took a light from the fire, and threw it on the bed and burnt the coverlid. On another occasion he took a jug full

of water from the boiler, and threw it over her; fortunately it had just been filled up, otherwise she must have been severely scalded. He makes away with or destroys everything he can lay his hands on; his bed he rips up and scatters its contents about; the sheets and blankets he tears to shreds; his clothing; he picks to pieces and burns; he pokes the fire with his boots; earthenware, glass, and ornaments he breaks: metal spoons he twists and renders useless. He got hold of his father's watch one day, and, after breaking the glass and the hands of it, put it into the oven, and when he felt sure it was well baked he told where it was and threatened to serve his mother's the same. A purse he emptied the contents of down the sink and restored it to its place; the two lower rows of glass in the window of the living-room cannot be kept whole, so paper is used. He is exceedingly quick and cunning in his movements, so much so that his father has never been able to detect him in any act of destruction. In sight he walks slowly and without animation; if pushed to make him go faster, he falls like a log. His appetite is at times voracious, showing a partiality for animal food; but he will not eat in the presence of his father, no matter how long he may have been without. He will steal anything eatable, even if he has said he did not like it or refused it the moment before. At times he will show an utter disregard to taste, for he will eat salt like sugar, munch fish bones and pins, and even swallow them. His habits are now very dirty. He began by occasionally passing his evacuations in bed, or as he walked about; now, during the day, he always selects a particular spot on the floor, for which he will wait with great patience until an opportunity offers; and so bent is he upon making a mess that he has produced prolapsus ani in his efforts to dirty his bed after it has been changed. He has been sent to various schools, from which he has always been dismissed in consequence of his assaults upon other children both older and younger than himself, as well as on account of his obstinacy, refusing to learn or speak excepting when he thinks proper. In the presence of strangers he will sometimes conduct himself like a lively and intelligent boy. His father has endeavoured to correct him by punishing him in various ways; but he disregards everything he has done to him. Although he dislikes the rod, the fear of it has never for a moment deterred him from repeating any irregularity. A cold bath has been tried to check his dirty habits; but he will walk into it with the greatest coolness. Neither punishment nor kindness has ever had any effect upon him. He has never expressed regret or sorrow for what he has done; and he appears to be quite without love or affection. He used slyly to pinch and strike his little brother when lying in the cradle dying. All he wants, he says, is a new father and mother and house. His memory is good, and he generally keeps his word if he has threatened to do anything.

Many of the above facts were detailed to me in his presence, to the general correctness of which he readily assented. He knew perfectly well that they were wrong, and said he did not want to be a good boy, and, with a grin, told me in plain language that he expected to go to that place where he had been taught that wicked boys were sent to; and although the horrors of it had been fully explained, he said he did not care. His tongue was shiny in patches as if recently blistered, and his circulation languid; his bowels acted daily, the evacuations being copious and very offensive; the abdomen was at times tumid, and during sleep he groaned distressingly.

The maternal grandfather of the child was a very eccentric, intemperate, and passionate man, and the child is said to resemble him much. The eldest children of two of his mother's three brothers are like the child, and the third brother spent some time in a reformatory.

Whilst talking to his father after the boy had left the room, on my first visit, his mother went to look after him, as he cannot be trusted out of sight; she found that he had taken his boot off and thrust it into the fire.

I had little difficulty in coming to the conclusion that this was a case of moral insanity, for conduct so opposed to all that is natural in a child I could not suppose due merely to perversity. From the appearance of his tongue and languid circulation, I ordered some alterative aperient twice a week, and some tonic mixture with tincture of iron twice a day. His evacuations became more natural, and he liked the tonic; but, as he did not improve in character, his father determined to try him with strangers in the country. In several places he was sent to he conducted himself very well for awhile; but as there was no real improvement, his father then tried to get him into the County Asylum. Not being actually in indigent circumstances, however, obstacles were placed in the way; and it was only after Dr. Welch, the parochial officer, reported the

case in his quarterly return of lunatics as not under proper care and control, the boy having recently attempted to set fire to the house and strangle himself, and the parish taking no notice of the case, that the Commissioners in Lunacy, through their solicitor, took proceedings under the 63th section of the 16th and 17th Vict., c. 97; and I was directed by the police magistrate to examine and report upon the case, which I did in nearly the following terms:—

"In pursuance of your order dated Feb. 6th, 1863, I on the 7th visited G. W. H—, the child referred to; and certify that he is a person of unsound mind, and not under proper care and control, but not ill-treated nor neglected by his father. I found him lying on a mattress with the tattered remains of a sheet on, and covered with shreds of a blanket, the remains of a mattress and blanket torn to pieces lying about the bed, and the wall smeared with excrement. On entering the room, I was saluted with—'I don't want to see you, you fool! You are a b—y fool!' He admitted that he had torn his sheet and blanket and smeared the wall for no other reason than 'he chose to,' and he bit his arm with great force to show me how he had torn the things, and said he sometimes tasted his excrement because it was nice; that he would not take any food from his father, not because he had beaten him (for that he did not care), nor because he disliked him, but because he did not give him enough. He did not care for the cold, because he could easily warm himself by tying a string round his neck. To many of my questions he told me to 'kiss or ax his —.' His little sister happened to come into the room, when he said, 'I'll smash that little bitch!' When I attempted to feel his pulse, he tried to get hold of my hand to bite it, and spat at me, and told me if I did not be off he would dab some faces in my mouth. His parents are not in a condition to provide that care and treatment which his case requires. The child has been under my observation since November, 1861; and the above is a fair example of his conduct at various times in my presence. I learn from his father that he has recently attempted to set fire to the house and strangle himself; that he uses the foulest language to his parents, and steals and destroys everything he can lay his hands on, so that he cannot be trusted a moment out of their sight."

I afterwards learned that he was sent to Colney Hatch, from which he was discharged as cured in a fortnight, for the reasons assigned in the following report of its medical officer to the visitors, as printed in a local paper, a copy of which had been sent to the guardians of the parish:—

"Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch,
March 13th, 1863.

"Gentlemen,—On bringing before you for discharge, on the 3rd instant, a boy of the name of George William H—, from Bethnal-green parish, you naturally enough expressed surprise at seeing one of such tender age (seven years), and you asked for my opinion in writing as to the propriety of sending such a case to a lunatic asylum.

"The facts of my having returned this boy to the Commissioners in Lunacy as 'not insane,' and discharged him seventeen days after admission, alone evidenced my estimate of his condition and of his unfitness for being here.

"During the short period of H—'s residence at Colney Hatch no single incident occurred to sustain the statements made in his certificate of admission. He was not 'personally filthy,' nor was he 'very filthy, obstinate, and vicious.' On the contrary, he was singularly clean, amiable, and well-disposed, attending regularly to the calls of nature. He had prolapsus of the lower bowel on admission, which accounted for the 'fæcal smell' alluded to by the certifying medical man. This prolapsus was immediately reduced, and the bowels kept regular by an aperient electuary.

"I have no hesitation in stating that I do not think anything could justify the sending such a case as that of George William H— to a lunatic asylum.

"I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your faithful servant,
"To the Visiting Committee of the Colney Hatch Asylum." "EDGAR SHEPPARD, M.D.

After what I have above detailed, it is scarcely necessary for me to add that the child continues much the same as when sent to the asylum, and took an early opportunity of asking his father if he would like to suck plums from his rectum.

The profession will accept the concluding paragraph of Dr. Sheppard's report as having been made without any communication with the father of the child; with Dr. Welch, under whose observation the boy has been for some considerable time, and upon whose certificate, I presume, he was sent to Colney Hatch; or with myself.

Bethnal House, April, 1863.

A Mirror OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY IN THE HOSPITALS OF LONDON.

Nulla est alia pro certo noscendi via, nisi quam plurimas et morborum et dissectionum historias, tam aliorum proprias, collectas habere et inter se comparare.—MORGAGNI. *De Sed. et Caus. Morb.*, lib. 14. Proœmium.

ROYAL LONDON OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL.

ACUTE GLAUCOMA TREATED BY IRIDECTOMY; GOOD RESULT.

(Under the care of Mr. BOWMAN.)

THE case of acute glaucoma we have to record is one of those remarkable instances which occasionally come under treatment at the hospital, and serve to prove indubitably the good effects of iridectomy, and to show that this operation when properly performed is capable, not only of completely arresting the progress of a disease which has defied the skill of so many, but also of restoring to the patient an amount of sight which previous to the introduction of this operation was seldom even hoped for.

The history is very similar to a case we recorded in our number for Nov. 2nd, 1862, under the care of Mr. Lawson, at the same hospital, where one eye had been previously lost by the disease, and the other had been similarly attacked; but coming under his treatment within twenty-four hours after the acute symptoms began, iridectomy was performed, and sufficient sight regained for the patient to be able to read No. 2 or pearl type.

In the patient now under our notice, the left eye had been suddenly seized with *glaucoma fulminans*—a name lately given by Von Graefe to rare cases of exceedingly intense glaucoma, under which the sight is lost within a few hours, even before the signs of acute inflammation are strongly developed. (See the last number of the *Archiv. f. Ophthalmologie*.) Blindness rapidly supervened, with acute inflammation, finally resulting in disorganization of the eye. For this tense, painful, and blind eye she was admitted into the hospital; but failing to gain relief from treatment, the globe was removed. It was whilst she was in the hospital that the right eye became attacked with glaucoma; but, rapid as was the progress of the case, the disease was arrested by iridectomy, and she is now able, with a 20-inch-focus convex glass, to read No. 2 easily, whilst previous to the operation she could not tell letters of No. 20, or eight-line Roman type, or discern the features of her friends.

There is another point of interest in this case; for, differing from most others, there is a good assignable cause for the first commencement of the disease, and probably in this patient it is the true one. Long watching, great exhaustion, and a sudden fright she believes produced the disease; and the effect seems so rapidly to have followed the assumed cause that one cannot disregard the apparent connexion between the two.

History.—Mary W—, aged seventy-three, a monthly nurse; always had good health, and up to Christmas last had never suffered any inconvenience or annoyance whatever from her eyes. One night about that time, whilst nursing a lady, and after two or three nights' watching, during which she had little or no sleep, she was, whilst half dozing in a chair, aroused with fright by a noise produced by the breaking of the window-ropes, causing her to think that some one had entered the room. This occurred at two o'clock A.M. An hour or so after this, she had violent pain in the left eye and in the head, accompanied by nausea, but no vomiting. The pain was so severe that she remembers no other symptom. At nine o'clock in the morning she was quite blind with that eye, and unable, she says, to distinguish light from darkness. She did not apply for any advice, nor undergo any treatment, although the eye continued exquisitely painful, and from her account seems to have become acutely inflamed. Compelled to leave her situation, and wanting almost the common necessities of life, she came to the hospital, and was admitted on the 6th February.

State of the left eye on admission.—The whole globe acutely inflamed; tension extreme (T 3); the cornea rough and semi-