

you must resort to a more copious administration of stimulant anodynes.

I formed my opinion from works published on the subject, and from letters of eye-witnesses, pupils of mine, who favoured me with communications from India; and this opinion I published in the "First Principles of Medicine" last December, previous to which the spasmodic cholera was never observed in this country, being totally different from the bilious diarrhoea which bore that name amongst us.

I have just had a most satisfactory confirmation. An English physician at Peterburgh, who has had extensive experience in the disease, writes, that the successful remedies were, uniformly, bleeding with laudanum, brandy, ether, and other stimulants. The necessity for applying external warmth must be obvious to every attending bystander, independent of medical advice. I doubt that the disease is contagious, any more than ague; but this point we must discuss in the lectures on the practice of medicine.

MR. JAMES CORNISH AND SIR ASTLEY COOPER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I venture to trouble you with a narrative, which, though somewhat lengthy, will I think not be uninteresting. The case remained among my papers almost forgotten, when a visit from Sir Astley Cooper to our neighbourhood revived its recollection. I am mistaken in your character for professional liberality, if you will not find a corner for an account of this affair. With much gratitude for the efforts you continue to make to rescue our profession from corporate thralldom, I remain, your very obedient servant,

JAMES CORNISH, M.R.C.S.L.
Falmouth, October 22, 1831.

In the *London Medical Repository* of March, 1822, and in Dr. James Johnson's *Medico-Chirurgical Review*, No. 9, June, 1822, a case was inserted of dislocated thigh-bone,* which was accidentally re-

* *London Medical Repository*, March, 1822.

CASE OF DISLOCATION OF THE THIGH BONE. By JAMES CORNISH, Surgeon, Falmouth.—Dislocations so frequently occur, and so frequently baffle the best-directed attempts to effect their reduction, that every circumstance connected with the history of these accidents that has the least practical value is worthy of attention. Under this consideration I beg to relate the following case:—In 1812, McFadden, a seaman, about twenty years of age, coming up from Greenwich to London on the outside

placed after the lapse of five years from the period of the injury. As some circumstances connected with the history of this case have subsequently occurred which require an explanation, allow me, although at so late a period from its origin, to give them through the medium of *THE LANCET*.

Having learnt that Sir Astley Cooper was preparing a work on dislocations, in December 1821 I sent him a relation of the case in question, and supposing that, as the man had been his patient, he might feel

of one of the stages, fell from the coach and injured his hip. He was carried into St. Thomas's Hospital, where his case was treated as fracture of the neck of the thigh bone. Having, after the lapse of some months, experienced no relief from the means that were adopted, he was discharged with the assurance that his limb would be useless to him as long as he lived. The man was subsequently taken into Guy's Hospital. Sir Astley Cooper, whose patient he became, thought the head of the femur was out of its socket, and after bleeding him, putting him into the warm-bath, and administering nauseating doses of emetic tartar, attempted to replace the dislocated bone. The attempt was unsuccessful, as were also others that were afterwards made, and he was again dismissed as an incurable cripple. In 1813, about twelve months after the accident, the man presented himself on crutches at the Falmouth Dispensary for admission, when he gave me the foregoing history of his case. On examining him, I found the limb about two inches and a half shorter than the other, entirely useless, producing great pain on putting it to the ground, and the knee and foot turned inward. There was considerable distortion about the joint, and the head of the bone appeared to have formed a socket for itself on the dorsum ilii; in short, he had every diagnostic symptom of the dislocation upwards, which Sir Astley Cooper has so accurately marked in his valuable essay on this subject. In consequence of the duration of the accident, and the failure of the attempts at reduction under the skillful management of Sir Astley Cooper, his case was considered irremediable, and nothing was done for him. In March, 1818, I met the man walking without the least degree of lameness, carrying a heavy basket on each arm. On satisfying myself that he was the patient I had examined at the Falmouth Dispensary, and on inquiring into the cause of his cure, he informed me that in the summer of 1817, five years after the accident, whilst on a passage from Falmouth to Plymouth, in a little coasting vessel, the ship made a lurch which knocked him down. At the moment he fell he heard a loud crack in his hip, and from that time he put aside his crutches and perfectly recovered the use of his limb. The man is now doing duty as an able seaman on board a ship which trades from this port to London. The practical importance of this case is not perhaps equal to the curiosity of its termination. It shows, however, the possibility of reducing a displaced joint, even after the lapse of years when every impediment to reduction may be fairly supposed to exist, more particularly the obliteration of the acetabulum, and when most surgeons would judge the attempt hopeless. And it also serves to illustrate in a very striking manner the proposition of Sir Astley Cooper, that "a slight effort when the muscles are unprepared will succeed in reduction of dislocation after violent measures have failed."—Cooper and Travers' *Surgical Essays*, vol. 1. Sir Astley Cooper's diagnostic accuracy in this case is also worthy of remark. ** I was a pupil in the Borough Hospital in the years 1810-11-12, in which time I saw Sir Astley Cooper reduce a dislocation of the hip, which had been out six months, and this, I think, he then spoke of as the most protracted case he knew in which surgical attempts at reduction had been successful.

some degree of interest in examining him personally, I informed him that the man was then serving on board a vessel which traded from Falmouth to London, and that if he wished to see him, I would direct him to present himself at Guy's Hospital for Sir Astley's particular inspection. To this communication and offer *I received no reply*. The Treatise on Dislocations soon after made its appearance, in which the author thought proper to admit my case, taking *no notice, however, of my communication to him on the subject*, but inserting it as "an extract from" some one of the journals. It was not, however, until the spring of 1823 that I had an opportunity of seeing the great book, and finding that my narrative stood a fair chance of being considered a fable, in consequence of Sir Astley's having stated in his remarks prefatory to the case, that "there is reason to suspect that some mistake exists in the relation;" that he "had carefully examined the books of both the hospitals through a period previous and subsequent to the time specified, and could find no such name," and that he wished me "to make further inquiries," I determined, as soon as an occasion presented itself, to examine the man, and communicate the result. In the mean time I had the honour to receive the following note from Sir A. Cooper:—

"June 23, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—You will oblige me by learning how *Fadder* reconciles the account he has given to you with that of his never having been a patient at either of our hospitals. Certain it is that there is some mistake respecting it, which the man should explain to you.

"Yours very truly,
"ASTLEY COOPER."

This note I answered as follows:—

"Falmouth, June 29th, 1823.

"Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your note. I regret extremely that the case of dislocation of the hip, which you have done me the honour to insert in your valuable work, is involved in some degree of suspicion, in consequence of *M'Fadden's* name not standing in the hospital books. It is about a year and a half since, that I inclosed to you the case in question, and the man being then employed on board a vessel which sailed from this port to London, I took the liberty of saying, that if you considered the case of sufficient interest, I would direct the man to present himself at Guy's for your particular inspection. Had I been acquainted with the result of the examination of the hospital registers previous to the publication of your book, I should have been enabled to give an explanation which would have removed the

disagreeable doubt which at present hangs around the narrative. Fortunately I can still do so. I have this morning seen a sister of this man, who informs me that his name is John Daniel M'Fadden, and that during the time he was on board a man-of-war, he called himself 'John Daniel.' She believes, that under this name he was admitted into the hospital. M'Fadden still sails from this port to London, and is shortly expected here. When he arrives, I will lose no time in ascertaining the fact. I learn from naval men, that it is a common practice for sailors to bear an assumed name, which is called a 'purser's name,' and it sometimes happens that a man is marked in the ship's books by half a dozen 'aliases.' In the mean time, if 'John Daniel' be found in the hospital entries, answering to the case recorded, I feel convinced, that as the case has obtained, and will obtain, an extensive circulation through the medium of your volume, that you will do me the justice to give this explanation such publicity as you may consider most likely to correct the unpleasant suspicion, that 'some mistake exists in the relation.' I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servant,

"JAMES CORNISH.

"Sir A. Cooper, Bart., Spring Gardens."

To this communication *I have received no reply*. Nearly ten years have now elapsed since my first communication to Sir A. Cooper, and although the "mistake" has been sufficiently explained to him, and he might have satisfied himself by personally examining the patient, he has thought proper to allow the case to bear the character of an imposture, through six editions of his work.

Why Sir Astley Cooper inserted this case without first ascertaining its accuracy and examining the patient, when he might have done both so easily; why he has published it as a *copy* from a journal, when it is a transcript of a *communication to himself*; why has he allowed *two* editions of his work to be given to the public before making *any* inquiry about it; and why he *continues* to represent it under the same character through every succeeding edition, Sir Astley himself can best explain.

"A patient with an unreduced luxation becomes a living memorial of the surgeon's ignorance or inattention."—*Treatise on Dislocations*, page 1.

If the Editor of THE LANCET thinks the foregoing specimen of professional candour requires any comment, he is at liberty to make it. J. C.

* * The facts here stated furnish their own commentary.—ED. L.