

the seizures. When the strength improved, the fits, contrary however to anticipation, never recurred. No abnormal conformation of brain was found, and I would attribute the epilepsy rather to the effects of irregularity of life on an organ protected by an unusually thin cranium, and, possibly, morbidly susceptible of impressions.

As regards treatment, little need be said. I am strongly of opinion that abstraction of blood subsequent to the operation, although recommended by some eminent surgeons, would have induced death speedily by convulsion. Mercury was given largely at the suggestion of my colleague, Mr. Bostock, who was strongly impressed with its efficacy in such cases. The post-mortem examination would certainly indicate the propriety of its exhibition; and although unsuccessful in its more specific action, yet the maintenance of a healthy state of the functions for so long may fairly be attributed in some measure to the effect of the calomel. No want of control over the sphincters occurred at any time. The great loss of substance, together with disorganization of a large portion of the hemisphere, and very slight disturbance of the sensorium throughout, may be viewed as facts corroborative of the theory of duality of the brain.

September, 1858.

ON A CASE OF FOREIGN BODY IN THE BRAIN; ABSENCE OF SYMPTOMS.

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IN THE LANCET of June 26th there was a report of a case in which recovery had followed an extensive wound of the brain. In the following case, which came under my notice a short time ago, it is still more strikingly shown how tolerant the brain may occasionally be, not only of injury, but also of the presence of a large foreign body, and that, too, for a considerable length of time.

Thos. G— was committed to the County Gaol to undergo six months' hard labour. I examined him on his admission, and observed that he had a small wound on the forehead, just above the nose; it was covered with a piece of plaster, and did not excite any particular attention. According to his sentence, he was put to hard labour, and continued well for about three weeks. On the 5th of June he complained of headache and general malaise. This, however, was prevalent throughout the gaol, in consequence of the warmth of the weather and some temporary deficiency in the ventilating apparatus. He continued poorly for about a week, and died rather suddenly, with symptoms of compression.

Assisted by Mr. S. P. Smith, I made an examination twenty-four hours after death. On opening the head and removing the dura mater, the anterior lobe of the right hemisphere of the brain was found considerably softened, it being impossible to remove it *en masse*; in its interior was an abscess containing about six drachms of pus. On taking away the softened cerebral matter, a piece of iron was found fixed against the cresta Galli of the ethmoid, occupying a large part of the roof of the right orbit. It weighed an ounce and a half, and was contained in a cyst, which appeared to be formed (at least in part) by the pushing in of the dura mater. The cyst contained also some small pieces of necrosed bone. On the under part of the right hemisphere there could be traced an indentation corresponding with the piece of iron, and in that part of the frontal bone where the wound was situated there was found a perpendicular slit, about an inch long; this was filled up by a membranous septum. The evidence at the inquest showed that fourteen months ago the deceased went out with some companions to try a gun. He several times discharged it, but at last the gun burst, it having been over loaded. The man was wounded in the forehead and hands. He was ill for some weeks, and then recovered, and from the time of his recovery to his admission into the gaol he enjoyed pretty good health, only complaining occasionally of a sensation of weight in the head, especially on stooping. Neither his sight nor smell were interfered with. It appeared that they found all the fragments of the gun excepting portions of the breech and lock. (It was proved to be a piece of the breech that was found in the head.)

The surgeon who attended him, Mr. Fletcher, of Walsall,

has very kindly furnished the following additional facts. He states: "I was called to see Thos. C—, I think on Easter Monday last year. I found him suffering from a wound caused by the bursting of a gun, the breech of which had blown out and struck him about the middle of the forehead. The external wound was ragged, much contused, and about an inch in diameter. The frontal bone was fractured, and that part of it immediately behind the external wound was deficient, as if it had been carried away by some solid body which had passed through the bone, and which, in my opinion, was still within the cranium. The man was *perfectly conscious*, and gave a distinct account of the accident, and this consciousness he constantly retained. He suffered no pain, and the only inconvenience of which he complained was a sense of an immense weight in the head; to use his own words, 'his head felt to be a ton weight, and so heavy that he could not raise it from the pillow.' He had not throughout the attendance a bad symptom; he slept well, and took whatever was allowed; it was, in fact, a case requiring no medical or surgical interference. During the attendance several fragments of bone came away from the wound, also a small piece of iron, which I took to be a portion of the gun-lock plate, and a small piece of wood. I continued to attend him about two months, at which time he was able to go about his usual employment. The wound did not perfectly heal, and continued to discharge a little when I last saw him. The only dressing applied to the wound was cold water and lint."

The above case is, I think, particularly interesting, there having been throughout no symptoms which would lead to the supposition that so large a foreign body was within the cranium. The position of the iron was also remarkable. I should rather have expected to find it on the left side, for the gun being applied to the right shoulder, the pieces would fly in a direction from left to right. No doubt the cresta Galli was struck, and this altered the course of the projectile.

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.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL. EPITHELIAL CARCINOMA OF THE TONGUE REMOVED BY THE ECRASEUR; RECOVERY. (Under the care of Mr. PAGET.)

THE tongue, like other organs of the body, is subject to various diseases, which demand medical and surgical interference. Amongst these may be enumerated inflammation, true muscular hypertrophy, tumours of various kinds, and malignant disease, especially cancer. The majority of operations upon the tongue are performed for the last of these, a disease by no means common, yet occasionally presenting itself for treatment in our large hospitals. Though most common in old people, as is the peculiarity of cancer, it is sometimes observed in the young, when the age is apt to mislead, unless the unmistakable nature of the affection renders the diagnosis pretty clear. There is good reason to believe that, in whatever manner it may appear, carcinoma of the tongue originates in the follicular structures, whence it gradually spreads to the other tissues. If left till in too advanced a condition for the removal of a portion only, then the entire excision of the organ has been practised, as was performed by Mr. Syme, of Edinburgh, on two occasions, whose cases have already appeared in this journal, (THE LANCET, vol. i. 1858, p. 46, and vol. ii. p. 168.) In his remarks on extirpation of the whole tongue, Mr. Syme feels himself warranted in asserting, that even in the event of success, as the permanency of relief would still admit of question, he thinks no hesitation is necessary in deciding against the repetition of this proceeding.