

patient bore this exploration extremely well, and that the General gave me, during the manipulation, such hints as he thought might be of use.

"To complete the statements respecting local appearances, I should add that the right knee and left wrist were very slightly swollen, in consequence of a rheumatic tendency to which the patient has been subject for years.

The general health is as favourable as possible, considering the severity of the wound, the pain experienced, and deprivation of sleep for almost thirty days. All febrile symptoms have disappeared (pulse 75); the skin is cool, and the appetite good. Sleep is now sufficient and refreshing; the aspect composed and dignified, without any expression of suffering.

"It may thus be inferred, that the patient is not in actual danger, and that the acute period—the most hazardous in gunshot wounds—is over. There are, however, certain local complications which should be taken into account.

"First, it is evident that the joint is open; that it has been inflamed; that the bullet is, though not in the articulation, at least in its vicinity; and that the resisting body met by the probe at less than an inch from the opening of the wound, is no other than the bullet lodged in the depression anterior to the pulley of the astragalus—viz., on the neck of that bone.

"The demonstration, or nearly so, of this fact is found in the circumstances of the wound—viz., the direction of the shot, the shape of the ball (conico-cylindrical), the perforation of the boot and the stocking in which the ball has not been found, the shreds of leather extracted at different intervals from the wound, the tumefaction observed immediately after the infliction of the injury in a point almost diametrically opposite to the aperture of entrance. &c. &c.

"I would finally mention the peculiar sensation and dull sound produced by the striking of the probe, a sensation which may, perhaps, leave some doubt on the mind, but which, being added to the other elements of diagnosis, seem to me to furnish more than probabilities.

"What should, however, be done in the state of things alluded to? Science certainly presents records of recoveries from gunshot wounds of joints without the extraction of the projectile, and its permanent lodgment in the joint; but these recoveries are exceptions rarely met with. We should, therefore, not be inactive, and give up the extraction of the ball, except this extraction presented serious difficulties and evident dangers. In the present case, however, no counter-indications of the kind exist. I am therefore of opinion that the ball should be extracted.

"Was it incumbent upon me to attempt the extraction at once? This was, no doubt, very feasible, and the operation indeed simple enough; it would have had the advantage of tranquillizing the minds of many, and of satisfying aspirations more generous than reasonable. A solution, long expected and obtained in a few moments, might certainly have been very acceptable. I thought it, however, wiser to proceed differently: because the immediate extraction would have necessitated incisions, because it would have been painful, would have given rise to a febrile reaction, and because, if I can say so, there was no hurry, as the state of the limb, and especially the joint, was every day improving.

"The measure which seemed to me the simplest, the least dangerous, is to dilate very gradually the tract of the wound to the point where I consider the foreign body is lodged—viz., to the depth of one inch; this dilatation to be effected by the introduction of little cylinders of gentian root of increasing size, for which fragments of prepared sponge might be substituted in a few days. It is extremely probable that, by means of this dilatation, the projectile may eventually be seen and touched by the finger, seized by a ball forceps, and extracted along a canal large enough to prevent laceration of the soft parts.

"Supposing that, after this dilatation, it is found that the foreign body is not the bullet, but a splinter detached from the tibia or astragalus—in other words, a narrow splinter—the extraction would be as clearly indicated as if it were a bullet, and could be immediately effected. Suppose even (so as to pass in review the least favourable probability) that this splinter be not necrosed, and have formed permanent adhesions with the neighbouring bones, extraction would no longer be called for. The dilatation, in that case, would have been useless, but also devoid of any hazard. I see, therefore, no serious objection to attempt extraction after the dilatation of the tract of the wound.

"I would, finally, express my dissent from any attempt at immediate searching for the ball without any certain knowledge of the locality it occupies. It would be better to wait either for the formation of an abscess, which would betray the point

where the ball is lodged, or would prove a migration which might bring the foreign body within reach.

"And, lastly, as regards amputation, I could only sanction it in case, which is not likely, some severe complication were to arise, such as deep abscesses, long and exhausting suppuration, considerable debility—in a word, the expectation of a fatal issue.

"One word more. I think that the General will recover. A few months may, however, elapse before this takes place; and a certain rigidity of the joint will ensue, as an inevitable consequence of a lesion of the surfaces of an articulation; but this semi-anchylosis will interfere but slightly with the functions of the limb.

Signed,

"NÉLATON."

## THE ALLEGED FRAUD ON THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

DURING the last few days many inquiries, written and verbal, have been made at our office respecting a subscription purporting to be raised on behalf of the widow of the late Mr. Brent, who filled for many years the office of Deputy-Coroner under the late Mr. Wakley. The information communicated to us left no alternative but to take such immediate steps as would put the medical profession and the public on their guard. One of the proprietors of this journal, therefore, made a statement at Bow street Police Court, the main object of which—his name having been freely used by the canvassers for money—was to disavow, on his part, any sanction to the proceeding. The perusal of the following letter from the brother of the late Mr. Brent, which the discussion that has arisen compels us to publish, will sufficiently explain why we have not felt ourselves justified in giving our support to this particular subscription:—

Vincent-terrace, Islington, Nov. 1862.

GENTLEMEN,—I wish to offer you, on my own part as well as in my mother's name, our earnest thanks for the annuity you have been pleased to grant her in consideration of the long services of my late brother, Mr. G. S. Brent, as Deputy Coroner for Middlesex.

My mother is now in her ninety-first year, and was mainly dependent on him for support. I am informed that during the last few weeks certain parties are making use of my brother's name, together with false statements, and are canvassing among the principal medical gentlemen for subscriptions; but I desire to assure both yourselves and the profession generally, that such a proceeding was quite unknown to my mother or myself, and that no person, as far as we are concerned, has been authorized to make such applications.

My late brother left no children, but left a widow (his second wife), to whom he had been married only a short time—a person who was never received or recognised by the members of his family.

I remain, gentlemen, gratefully yours,

To Messrs. Wakley.

JOHN F. BRENT.

## MARYLEBONE POLICE COURT.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH.

ALFRED JOHN DAVIS, aged twenty six, of 13, Grenville-street, St. Pancras, was brought before Mr. Mansfield, charged by William Hewitt, a constable belonging to the Mendicity Society, with obtaining from Mr. Adams, of 5, Henrietta-street, Cavendish-square, the sum of one guinea, under false and fraudulent pretences.

Mr. W. Adams, F.R.C.S., deposed—I live at 5, Henrietta-st., Cavendish-square. On Saturday last, the prisoner called at my house, stating he had come to solicit subscriptions on behalf of the widow of the late Mr. Brent, Deputy Coroner. He said he was a clerk in THE LANCET Office; that he had formerly been a clerk to Mr. Brent, and described to me the destitution into which she had now fallen. He further said he had been authorized by Dr. Wakley to go round to the members of the medical profession, to see if there could not be sufficient money collected to purchase an annuity for Mrs. Brent, and to enable her to be admitted into the Medical Benevolent College. In case the amount collected was not sufficient, Dr. Wakley had liberally promised to give £50. The prisoner then showed me