

way developed all its resources, and made them available in practice. He sometimes humorously says, "they call M. Piorry a quack." For although *hobby men* seldom escape ridicule or censure, still the quality which makes them so, is the one which enables them to sift from their favorite specialty every idea worth knowing; they are, in fact, generally the original discoverers and inventors, and the world ultimately profits by what was considered their folly. So, M. Piorry.—*Trans.*]

# ACUTE IDIOPATHIC TETANUS IN A YOUNG CHILD, WITH POST-MORTEM APPEARANCES.

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ON Saturday afternoon, the 9th of August, 1851, I was requested to see Robert Simpson, a boy aged 5 years 6 months, who had been laboring since the previous Thursday morning under the following symptoms:— He was at first noticed to carry his head stiffly, and when he looked to either side, he would turn the whole body. Throughout the day, he was noticed to be dull, and excited, alternately; the skin was hot and dry, he refused his food, and he occasionally complained of his throat being sore, and also of pain in his belly. On Friday morning he seemed better, but as his bowels had not been moved the previous day, his mother gave him a dose of castor oil. On Friday afternoon, while at play in the yard, he was seized with a convulsive spasm, which threw him on his back; the mother told me, that, being alarmed, she went out and desired him to get up; he said he could not. When she took him up, he appeared to be convulsed, and became stiff and rigid. These convulsive attacks recurred several times that afternoon, and became more frequent during the night. The following morning (Saturday) the parents determined to seek medical aid. The father noticed the peculiar expression of the features, and also that the jaws were closed; this alarmed him, and he requested me to see the child.

Upon entering the room I was struck with the peculiar appearance of the features; every muscle was in "tonic spasm," giving a hideous expression to the countenance; the teeth were partially exposed by the drawing of the mouth to each side. The *ala nasi* were distended and drawn upwards, the eyelids were half closed, but the eyes were unaffected; he was enabled to roll them about with perfect ease; the jaws were partially closed, and any attempt to open them would bring on a spasm, and the teeth would be brought together with a snapping noise. He lay on his back, the limbs extended. Upon my attempting to bend his legs, the muscles resisted; he could, however, perform flexion and extension with impunity. The breathing was short and hurried, pulse 160, weak and fluttering, the whole surface bathed in profuse perspiration. Deglutition was performed with comparative ease; he swallowed beef-tea which his mother had been giving him at intervals since the morning. About every ten minutes he would be seized with spasm of the muscles of the back, thighs and legs; at such times he would rest on the occiput and heels. During the spasm, he complained much of

pain at the præcordium, and would call out to his father to press on his belly, which seemed to give him ease. A blister was ordered to be applied to the whole length of the spine ; as his bowels had not been moved, although the castor oil had been repeated, four grains of calomel were given, to be repeated in four hours if necessary. Chloroform was also ordered to be given by inhalation, whenever the spasms occurred.

I returned in two hours, accompanied by my friend, Dr. Gibb ; we examined the whole body carefully, but there was no sign of injury, nor had he received any blow ; all the symptoms above described were as marked as before. He had had two inhalations of chloroform ; after the first, the little fellow remained in a tranquil state, apparently sleeping for fully fifteen minutes.

Visited patient again at 9½, P.M. There has been considerable abatement in the symptoms, the spasms recur at longer intervals, and are less severe ; during the last half hour he has had no spasm. After the third or fourth inhalation of chloroform the trismus seemed to abate ; the father said he opened his mouth wide enough to protrude his tongue. The calomel operated twice, the stools were passed in bed. The breathing was less hurried ; pulse 110, fuller. I ordered the chloroform to be continued, and also that he should receive nourishment at intervals in the shape of beef-tea.

About midnight, the spasms came on with redoubled violence, and he died at 2, A.M. Death occurred during a severe fit.

*Post-mortem.*—Assisted by my friends, Drs. R. P. Howard and Wright, I proceeded to make a post-mortem examination, 30 hours after death. The muscles were perfectly relaxed, there was not the slightest "rigor mortis." The whole surface was covered with petechial spots. On carefully opening the spinal canal, a clot of blood was discovered lying upon, and completely surrounding, the meninges of the cord, the clot extending from the sixth cervical to about the tenth dorsal vertebra. The meninges were much congested. On opening into the dura mater, a small quantity of serum exuded, not more than is usual in a state of health. There was no disease of the vertebræ.

*Remarks.*—This is a case of some interest, inasmuch as the symptoms during life did not indicate pressure on the spinal marrow. Cases of effusion of fluid blood between the dura and pia mater, are mentioned by Jescay ; he found, also, the vessels of the pia mater gorged with blood. He, however, considers these cases as the result of the rude use of the chisel and saw. The petechial spots, I have no doubt, existed early in the disease, but they escaped notice during life ; the other symptoms were so striking as to fix my attention exclusively ; however, they showed an evident hemorrhagic tendency. It would have been interesting to search further, but I was prevented by the parents, from whom I obtained permission with difficulty, to examine even the state of the spinal cord.—*Canada Medical Journal.*