

Actual Caution, or Hot-needle.—In the last of the six volumes, thirteen figures are given, which represent individuals at their occupations and pastimes, or in the stately robes of office, for the purpose of exhibiting the spots where the cautery ought to be applied in diseases of the eye. These spots are situated upon the forehead, temples, back of the hand, and the anterior portion of the leg. Each particular spot has its name, and its relative situation clearly marked out. It is in the survey and mapping of these famous and important spots that the Chinese doctor expends a great deal of pains; in fact, they constitute the principal elements of his external anatomy. If the cautery cannot be applied to the part itself, the question arises, where, then, ought it to be applied? To the solution of this problem, he addresses himself with all the learning, diligence, and physiological tact he is master of. But so refined and recondite are his reasonings, and so great is the natural hebetude and tardiness of my own mind, that I seldom feel much inclination to follow him.

The following is an authentic representation of the *hair-needle*, *maou-chin*, or cauterising instrument:—It is about an inch and three-quarters in length, and has a point “as sharp as the trunk of a musquito.” It is applied in violent nervous pains of the head, when the eyes suffer by sympathy, dimness of sight, staphyloma, *nebulæ*, cataract, sloughing of the cornea, &c.



PATHOLOGY OF DEATH BY DROWNING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I beg to inclose the reports of two post-mortem examinations of persons upon whose bodies inquests were held at Islington, and it will be perceived, that although immersion in water appears to have been the cause of death in both cases, the condition of the brain and its vessels was very dissimilar. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. H. SEMPLE, Surgeon.

Islington, April 22, 1841.

Post-mortem Examination of Ann Foster, April 20th, 1839.

The above-named woman was found dead in the New River, and an inquest sat upon the body on the 22nd of April.

There were no external marks of violence, and the body was fat and in good condition.

Head.—The jugular veins were not turgid, and when an incision was made into them only a very small quantity of fluid blood

issued from the wound; no blood was observed between the scalp and the skull, nor between the latter and the dura mater; but there were strong adhesions between the dura mater and skull, immediately below the vertex; this appearance was probably due to some previous attack of inflammation of the membrane. The brain did not appear congested or turgid with blood, but, on the contrary, remarkably pale; and its veins, instead of being full and gorged, as in most cases of death by suffocation, were quite inconspicuous; the brain was healthy throughout, its minute vessels not injected, and a very small quantity of serous fluid was found in the ventricles.

Chest.—On opening the chest the lungs appeared rather voluminous and filled the cavity; the pericardium contained a small quantity of serous fluid; the heart, viewed externally, appeared rather larger than its usual size. This organ was removed and examined, and a quantity of fluid blood, rather less than half a pound, flowed from the right auricle and ventricle; the left ventricle was hypertrophied in such a manner that the walls were much thickened, while the cavity was diminished in size; the aorta was considerably contracted near its origin, but there was no disease of its valves; the lungs externally appeared healthy and crepitated; the bronchial tubes contained a small quantity of frothy mucus.

Abdomen.—The liver was large, but healthy; the stomach appeared about half filled with fluid matter, and on its external surface the minute arteries were injected, indicating some inflammatory action. This organ was tied at both ends, and removed for further examination. The small intestines and the mesentery presented numerous inflammatory appearances; the glands of the mesentery were considerably enlarged. The intestines were examined internally along their whole extent, and marks of inflammation were discovered in patches in various parts, particularly in the duodenum and ileum; they contained a large quantity of semifluid matter, undergoing the natural process of digestion; the large intestines were generally healthy and filled with fæces.

The stomach and its contents were afterwards examined. About a quart of fluid matter, consisting of bread, currants, milk, &c., was removed and preserved for examination. The inner surface of the stomach was uniformly overspread by a light pink blush, such as is seen in that organ during the act of digestion. The matter adhering to the mucous membrane of the stomach was carefully scraped off, boiled with distilled water, and filtered; the tests for oxalic acid, arsenic, and corrosive sublimate, were successively applied, but without any marked result. There was no smell in the contents of the stomach indicating the presence of laudanum or prussic acid,

*Post-mortem Examination of Mary Callahan,
April 20th, 1841.*

The above-named woman was found dead in a shallow pond near the Chalk-road, Islington, and an inquest sat upon the body on the 20th of April.

There were no external marks of violence, nor any appearance of putrefaction. The surface of the body was quite clean, having been washed previous to the examination. The eyes were half open, and the pupils in a state between dilatation and contraction. The nostrils were dry, and the mouth empty. The hands were not clenched, and the fingers were nearly straight.

Head.—A considerable quantity of fluid blood was found between the scalp and the skull, and on removing the latter a large portion flowed from the sinuses and veins of the dura mater, which exhibited great sanguineous congestion. The brain itself was excessively congested, its veins and capillaries being turgid with blood; the ventricles of the brain contained only a small quantity of serous fluid. With the exception of the congested state of the vessels, the membranes of the brain and the brain itself were perfectly healthy.

Chest.—The lungs were voluminous and filled the cavity of the chest. The right lung was partly adherent to the parietes of the chest, indicating some previous attack of pleurisy; this lung was also emphysematous at its edges. In other respects the substance of both lungs was healthy and crepitant throughout. The trachea and bronchial tubes were then examined; the former contained no fluid, but the latter, particularly towards their smaller ramifications, were filled with a soapy tenacious mucus, exactly corresponding in character with that described by authors as peculiar in the bronchial tubes of the drowned. The mucous membrane of these tubes was healthy. The heart appeared, externally, of its natural size, but the walls of the left ventricle were thickened and its cavity diminished in size. The right ventricle and auricle were of the natural size and appearance, both contained a large quantity of fluid blood, as did also the pulmonary artery. The venæ cavæ, the vena azygos, and their smaller tributary veins, were all much distended with fluid blood.

Abdomen.—On making an accidental incision into the œsophagus, that tube was seen to be filled with a clear watery fluid; the stomach and œsophagus were included in two ligatures, removed from the body, and examined. The internal membrane of these organs was perfectly healthy, and of its natural colour. The stomach contained about three ounces of clear fluid, quite destitute of smell and colour, with the exception of a minute quantity of green vegetable matter, resembling the *confervæ* found in ponds. The liver was of the natural size, but its substance was firm, dense, and of a dark colour,

owing to excessive congestion. The intestines were healthy, except that they exhibited a highly-congested state of their vessels.

In both these cases drowning appears to have been the cause of death, but no evidence was offered to prove that in either case violence had been committed towards the deceased, or in what manner they had come into the water, and verdicts to that effect were returned.

UTERINE HÆMORRHAGE PRECEDING DELIVERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—If the following appears to you worthy of notice, by inserting it in your widely-circulated Journal, you would much oblige, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. FORSTER WELLS, M.R.C.S.L.

1, Steward-street, Spitalfields,
April 28, 1841.

At five o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st of the present month, at the request of a practitioner of midwifery, I visited Mrs. Croley, ætat. 33, of a nervous temperament, in the ninth month of her second pregnancy, who had been seized with hæmorrhage at four o'clock in the morning of the same day, which had continued unabated up till eleven o'clock, without the superintention of labour-pains, and had recurred about half an hour previous to my seeing her.

I found her lying in the usual obstetric position; the surface of the body covered with a cold perspiration; the pulse could scarcely be felt; the countenance was deathly pale; the eyes and mouth surrounded by a dark-coloured areola; the pupils were dilated, and the tongue white and moist. The state of the bed did not indicate the loss of much blood. Upon examination I found the vagina filled with coagula, and the os uteri sufficiently dilated to admit the points of two fingers; the liquor amnii had been evacuated naturally in the early part of the day, and the vertex was presenting.

Under these circumstances I considered it impossible to attempt the operation of turning, and recommended the administration of the ergot in two-scruple doses every hour, until the mouth of the womb should be sufficiently dilated to admit the perforator, and warm brandy and water freely in the intervals. Upon seeing her again at seven o'clock two doses of the ergot in powder had been rejected, there was still an "oozing" of blood, and the general symptoms were much the same. A decoction of four drachms of ergot in six ounces of water was administered in two doses, with an interval of half an hour, with decided good effect.

At nine o'clock the uterus acting vigorously, and its mouth about two inches in