

CASE
OF
CAROTID ANEURISM.

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THE carotid artery has of late been so often taken up, that the operation in cases of aneurism is no longer rare. But this, like all important operations, has not been performed so frequently as to perfect the pathological views of the case, or to preclude advantage from bringing into comparison circumstances of detail. I venture, under such an impression, to relate to the Society the following case.

December 10th, 1818, James Humphriss was admitted into St. Bartholomew's Hospital, with an aneurism of the carotid artery. He was a glass-cutter by occupation, aged fifty-two. About three months before his entrance into the Hospital, he

had been knocked down and beaten about the right side of his head, in which he had suffered much pain. Seventeen days previously, he discovered a pulsating tumor behind the angle of the lower jaw, on the right side. At the time of his admission it was about the size of a pullet's egg; he was suffering severe pain over the right side of his head, and the whole arterial system beat with powerful action. He had been taking mercury, and was in a state of ptyalism.

On account of this last circumstance the operation was deferred until the 19th of December; during which interval the tumor had somewhat increased. In reference to the operation, it is proper to notice, that the omo-hyoidæus muscle so completely traversed the wound, and its connections being more than ordinarily firm, it could not be pressed aside, and some of its fibres were necessarily divided. The artery was brought into view on the inner side, next the trachea; and the theca was so firm and dense that it was necessary to use the knife in separating it; after which a single ligature was drawn upon it. The internal jugular vein did not at all protrude in the way.

After the operation the right subclavian artery beat with increased force; but this did not continue. The pulsation in the aneurismal tumor did not cease on drawing the ligature, although it was much more faint. The patient said he had lost

the severe pain in his head, and felt only a slight pain over the right eye, and an uneasiness in the right shoulder, which soon went off. He suffered no irritation in the larynx or pharynx. The pulse at the wrist was much weaker than before the operation.

8 o'clock, p. m. Has lain very quiet since the operation. The intellect is quite clear; and there is no affection of the nervous system, no irritation in the trachea, no accumulation of mucus. He has swallowed a pint of panada with perfect ease. There is no uneasiness in the neck, but some slight pain over the forehead, and also in the abdomen; he has passed no urine; pulse about 80 and soft, but beating with more force in the right than in the left arm; tumor reduced in size about one half, and faintly beating. He expresses himself to be much more comfortable than before the operation.

20th. He has no pain in the head; no difficulty of deglutition; no irritation in the trachea; pulse about 80 and soft. Has much uneasiness and sense of fulness in the abdomen, extending from the epigastric to the right hypochondriac region.

21st. He is quite as well as yesterday, except in having a slight irritation of the trachea; pulse 80 and soft. The tumor is not more than a quar-

ter the size it was before the operation ; and there is no pulsation in it.

22d. The patient has a slight increase of irritation in the trachea, and a little cough to get up mucus. The wound was dressed for the first time, and the upper part of it had healed.

29th. No irritation in the trachea. He is going on very well, and is comfortable, with the exception of the uneasiness in the abdomen, which has continued.

January 10th, 1819. The ligature came away in the dressings, this morning ; and immediately he lost all uneasiness in the abdomen, which had never ceased since the operation.

14th. The wound has thrown out some fungus, and discharges rather freely ; in other respects he is well.

21st. The fungous appearance of the wound has rather increased ; it had ceased to discharge. In the evening the neck swelled considerably between the wound and the jaw.

22d. The right side of the neck is very tumid ; the swelling extending from the middle of the wound to the lower jaw, affecting deglutition, but not at all the breathing. The fungous' granula-

tions are glassy, and the wound produces no discharge. The tongue is covered with a white coat; his pulse is quick, and he has had a disturbed night; the swelling however did not increase. About eight o'clock in the evening he became very ill, complaining of being low and uneasy; had great difficulty of deglutition; a fit of coughing came on, and respiration grew difficult. He was quite sensible. Mr. Lawrence, happening to be at the Hospital at this time, saw him, and made an incision into the aneurismal tumor, from which a small quantity of pus and coagulum issued; he expired immediately afterwards.

23d January. An examination of the state of the parts was made fifteen hours after death. The process of obliteration of the artery below the ligature was complete; the vessel being perfectly closed; a plug was formed, extending downwards as far as the division of the arteria innominata. The artery above the ligature was open and inflamed, and pus was found in it. The aneurismal sac had undergone the proper changes to effect a cure; it was contracted around a firm coagulum, and the inner surface of it bore no indication of having been inflamed. Thus the pus, which issued from the incision, must have been the product of the inflamed artery. The sac was formed at the bifurcation of the common carotid. The aorta and other large arteries were so increased in size, that the area of their sections was nearly

doubled. Globules of air were found adhering to the inner surface of the aorta and other large arteries ; and in the head air was found under the tunica arachnoidæa. The bulk of the swelling in the neck, which came on the day previous to his death, seemed to be formed of serous effusion in the cellular tissue.

In viewing the progress of this case, it seemed to be a striking effect of the operation to subdue the action of the arterial system ; as from the timē it was finished, the pulse became so very much softer than it had been before. And the uneasiness and feeling of fulness of the abdomen may be fairly attributable to the presence of the ligature so near the par vagum, keeping up irritation upon it, as the whole sensation ceased the moment the ligature was removed. It is, probably, to the diseased state of the vessel that the inflammation of that portion of the artery which was between the ligature and sac must be referred. And, perhaps, in the fact of air being found introduced into the arterial system, may be discovered the cause of the sudden termination of life.