

any symptom which indicated that any disease remained in the spine. The probability is, that the disease was entirely eradicated; that callus was formed to supply the loss of whatever bony matter had been removed, and all the consequences were prevented which must otherwise have ensued. I saw this young lady many times afterwards while she continued in England, and, as long as I had opportunities of seeing her, she continued in good health.

One circumstance in this case is worthy of observation. Mr. Heaviside made the issues by incision. General Dumourier chose to be present when they were made, and afterwards declared, both to Mr. Heaviside and myself, that he suffered more mental anguish in witnessing this operation than he had suffered in all the engagements he had witnessed put together. Human nature is composed of strange materials.—This wholesale destroyer of human life could cut down his thousand and ten thousand of human beings, with no other feeling than that of a desire to cut down as many more; yet he trembled at the sight of an operation of no very terrific appearance, performed upon a young child, done to restore her to health, and perhaps to save her life.

This is one of the many cases which I could produce to show that the adoption of this practice, in the earliest stages of this disease, affords, what I may call, a certainty of stopping its progress. I see patients in every direction, who, in early life, were subjected to its ravages, and who, by adopting the treatment I have described, were secured from its effects, and are now approaching old age. When a professional man is himself convinced of the propriety of following the course that has been described, the great difficulty he has to encounter is to persuade his patients, or their friends, to submit to the proper treatment in the early stages of the disease, at which time it may be used with the greatest advantage. A single point, formed by one spinal process, appears to project outwards, either among the dorsal or the lumbar vertebræ; the child complains of pains in that part of the back which is near it, and perhaps of irregularity in the action of the legs. If a surgeon be consulted who understands the facts, and proposes the proper remedy, upon the ground that the existence of the disease is certain, and therefore the sooner the only effectual remedy is applied the better it will be for the patient; this, as Abernethy said upon another occasion, the parents will not believe; they will not believe that a little projection, such as that which they see, can require such serious treatment; they will consider about it, and consult their friends. Every friend who is consulted has some infallible remedy to propose, and nu-

merous pretended remedies are brought into view. In a multitude of counsellors there is said to be wisdom, but in these cases there is nothing but folly. The stay-maker, the shape-mender, the spine-stretcher, are brought into play; and when, by their united exertions, the patient's disease and deformity are increased, the constitution is ruined, and life endangered. Recourse is again had to the surgeon, who is at last seriously consulted, and may think himself fortunate if even he saves that life with an injured constitution, which he might, with ease, have preserved in good health, if a rational system of treatment had been acted upon when he was first consulted. I saw many such cases during several years in which they were under the care of Mr. Ford. He always insisted, as soon as he saw the decided projection of a single vertebra, not only upon forming issues to keep the discharge in the neighbourhood of the disease; but upon suspending the head as I have described, and upon keeping the patient, as much as circumstances would permit, in the open air, with easy exercise, and attention to diet and medicine. He invariably followed this course of treatment when he was allowed to act for himself, and when he did so, I never knew him lose a single patient. When they applied to him, after they had long persevered in a different course, and brought themselves into a dangerous situation, he, like others, had his imperfect cures and his total failures; but the uniformity of his success, when his patients from the beginning followed the course that he prescribed, indelibly fixed it upon my mind, that this is the course which, in the treatment of this class of spinal curvatures, ought to be followed to ensure success. I am, Sir, yours, &c.

T. SHELDRAKE.

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NOTE FROM MR. SHELDRAKE.

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*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I am not, in any manner, acquainted with your correspondent, Mr. J. H. Heaton, of Tickhill; I will not, therefore, speak of him further than to say, that if I have written any thing that is unintelligible, incorrect, or untrue, *that* is a matter of fact which may be demonstrated; and if Mr. J. H. Heaton can, and will perform such demonstration, the profession and the public will be benefited, and I shall stand corrected and improved, for which I shall be very thankful. And am yours, &c.

T. SHELDRAKE.

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