

very healthy and pliant cicatrix is usually obtained by this remedy. In many of the favourite seats of rodent ulcer, the eyelids to wit, the use of escharotics is very inconvenient; and in these, free excision, followed by the transplantation of healthy skin from the forehead, cheek, or temple, is the best measure. The details of such operations will vary with each individual case, and do not form part of our present report."

28. *Rupture of the Rectus Abdominis.* By M. LEGOUËST.—Cases of rupture of the rectus are rare, so that M. Nélaton only found it occurring in four instances out of forty-nine cases of rupture of muscle. A case related by Boyer is especially interesting as it was completed by an autopsy. A young man complained of pain in the abdomen during vomiting, and after death the two ends of the ruptured muscle were found separated from each other to the extent of an inch by effused blood, the rupture taking place at the tendinous interstice situated opposite the umbilicus and the first lower intersection. The subject of the present case was a soldier, aged 27, of good muscular development, who, a week before, while performing some gymnastic exercise, was attacked with severe pain in the abdomen, which increasing and being accompanied by swelling, he came to the Val de Grâce. At three centimetres above the pubis a hard, well-defined tumour was observed, which was not increased in size on coughing, and exactly followed the course of the right rectus: increasing in breadth towards the umbilicus from two and a half to four centimetres. After four days' rest it had diminished one-half in size, not then being more than three fingers in breadth, and in three days later only a slight hardness remained. The case thus terminated very well; but it might have been otherwise, for the epigastric artery at about midway between the umbilicus and pubis enters the substance of the right rectus, giving it branches. These or the trunk itself might become ruptured by the effort which caused a healthy muscle to yield, and thus give rise to a diffused aneurism. This would the more be to be feared as the muscle is here only covered posteriorly by loose cellular tissue and peritoneum. All authors speak of only a small quantity of blood being effused, but in this case the tumour reached from the umbilicus to within three centimetres of the pubis. It is therefore probable that some small arterial branches were divided, and that the arrest of the bleeding was due not only to the retraction of their ends but to the compression exerted by the effused blood itself. The only thing to be feared, then, was the purulent transformation of the coagulum; but rest, regimen, cold applications, and the good constitution of the patient averted this mischief.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Nov. 3, from *Gazette des Hôp.*, No. 76.

29. *Cure of the Deaf and Dumb.*—Considerable interest has been excited in the Parisian scientific world, by the alleged successful treatment, by a lady, of several deaf and dumb children. The facts, as detailed in the *Gazette des Hôpitaux* and other Journals, appear to be the following: About the month of August, 1855, Mdlle. Cléret, a private teacher, residing in a populous locality in the suburbs of Paris, asked assistance from the Minister of Public Instruction, founding her request, among other motives, upon her discovery of a method of restoring hearing to the deaf and dumb. This means discovered by chance, she had successfully employed in a number of cases, after having proved its efficacy on herself; it consists in pouring into the ear 4, 5, 6, or 8 drops of sulphuric ether every day. After using this for 15 or 20 days, in order that its energy might be maintained, its use is suspended for a day or two, and then recommenced, when its application may be continued for a very long time, if not for an indefinite period. A committee—comprehending, as medical men, M. Lélut, president; MM. Bérard and Béhier—was appointed to investigate the matter. This duty they executed with much attention, when Mdlle. Cléret was attacked with a severe illness. Having waited without much hope of her recovery, they have reported on it as being a subject as yet undecided. The following facts have been observed by them: Twenty-nine children have been treated in this manner with advantage. Two of these, who had been examined by the committee, were completely cured. Seven children, never previously under any

treatment, completely deaf and dumb, have all, especially four of them, after eight or nine months, manifested very remarkable improvement; noise and the sound of the voice being quite perceptible to them. The reporter of the committee has taken care to add, that the greatest caution had been taken to avoid all cause of error, and to prevent any illusion which might result from perceptions obtained through the other senses. Nor is this all. The committee, wishing to increase the opportunities to study the means used by Mdlle. Cléret, and desiring especially to examine other children besides those exclusively confided to this lady, deputed one of its members to take under his own care, patients to be treated according to Mdlle. Cléret's method. Nearly twenty persons were intrusted to him, principally deaf and dumb children, and some old people, whose hearing was impaired, or only existed on one side. In all these cases the result has been very remarkable. Convalescents from typhus fever have had their hearing restored by the same means. In conclusion, with the exception of two or three children, attested by authentic certificates, as deaf and dumb, and who hear well, the committee has established only some incomplete results of experiments begun and not finished, some manifest improvements definite. Such experiments are, no doubt, however, so far unsatisfactory; and, with every confidence in the report, we must regard its imperfect nature as a reason for suspending any opinion on the matter until we can be furnished with evidence of a more complete and perfect nature.

Case by Dr. Lafargue.—I took under my care a deaf and dumb boy, eight years of age. The treatment was commenced on the 27th of April last. Every day I drop into each of his ears eight drops of rectified sulphuric ether. At first, pain was experienced in the right ear, and the amount introduced into it was reduced to four drops; but, since then, a tolerance of the remedy has been established. I now use eight drops for each ear. The improvement was almost instantaneous. At the end of two or three days the little patient began to say, "Papa," "Mamma," "Aunt," etc.; but, singularly, he pronounced all these words in a low tone. The articulation of the sounds will, no doubt, be an education of the hearing. The child hears the sound of a bell, the striking of a clock, etc. These unusual sounds interest and amuse him much. He hears better with the right than the left ear; and as the former is the organ in which pain was at first chiefly complained of, I have been led to ask myself if the curative action is proportional to the physiological effect. Experience alone can answer the question.—*Revue Médico-Chirurgicale.*

In an article on the same subject, contained in the August number of the *Journal de Médecine et de Chirurgie Pratiques*, we find the following remarks:—

Some doubts having been expressed regarding the innocuousness of the treatment by ether, we requested Dr. Béhier to tell us if the patients examined by the commission, of which he was convener, had had reason to complain of the treatment.

"By no means," replied M. Béhier. "On the contrary, we saw deaf and dumb children, perfect little savages before the treatment, become tractable and obedient as soon as the improvement of their deafness began to make them amenable to direction. Ether is a purely empirical remedy. When is this agent useful? when is it not? These are questions which I cannot answer. All I know is, that the only unfortunate result I have seen from its use has been its failure in certain cases. It causes a little pain; it is sometimes badly borne; in these cases it is sufficient to employ it at longer intervals. Although I do not use the remedy in my own practice, I could cite four new cases of complete deafness cured by the instillation of ether since the publication of my report."

M. Fossagrives has not as yet published the result of his experiments; but some other practitioners, in reply to the appeal of Dr. Debout, have published a certain number of cases, which are, on the whole, favourable to the remedy of Mdlle. Cléret.

Still, we persist in the belief that ether will not realize the exaggerated expectations which have been entertained regarding it. If it only relieve deafness by dissolving the cerumen which encrusts the membrana tympani, it can only act by relieving a morbid condition hitherto unknown, and which unfortunately, to judge from certain statistics furnished us by Dr. Triquet, aurist in Paris, is not the most common cause of deafness.

Up to the 18th of July, M. Triquet had treated by ether 110 patients (rich and poor) affected, some with chronic catarrh of the middle ear, others with nervous deafness—all *deaf*, be it well understood, and subject to ringing in the ears. In all these cases, care had been taken to test the power of hearing before and after the treatment. The result has been this: The patients have been treated with 30 to 40 drops of ether every three, five, or seven days, rarely every day. There has always been immediate pain, without consecutive amelioration; far from it—the deafness and the ringing in the ears have augmented progressively with the number of instillations. In twenty cases the pain and redness of the auditory canal have been so violent as to have necessitated the employment of antiphlogistics. The patients (women) have suffered from headache, which has continued for weeks, and deprived them of sleep, although the treatment was suspended on the very day that the headache was experienced.

M. Triquet had thought, as the result of his first trials, that ether might be used without inconvenience to dissolve ceruminous concretions; but he is now forced to confess that, even in these cases, its uses may occasion accidents, such as otitis, with considerable swelling of the lining membrane of the auditory meatus.

On the whole, the instillation of ether in the case of 110 patients, made with all possible precaution, has not produced, according to Dr. Triquet, any perceptible amelioration, and in a considerable proportion has manifestly aggravated the condition of the patients. The author may, no doubt, be reproached with having unconsciously, in his character of specialist, deepened the shadows in the above picture; but, even charging to the account of individual susceptibility the accidents attributed to ether, we must still see here a list of 110 failures out of 110 patients. This result, it must be allowed, is not encouraging; and there is much reason to apprehend that M. Menière only expressed the truth in writing to M. Debout, that a belief in the efficacy of ether to cure deafness was one of those generous dreams which pass away with the morning light.—*Ed. Med. Journ.*, Sept. 1, 1860.

OPHTHALMOLOGY.

30. *Conical Cornea treated by Operation.*—Some months since Mr. Bowman published (see No. of this Journal for Ap., 1860, p. 554), an account of some cases of conical cornea in which vision was greatly benefited by converting the natural circular pupil into a slit. GEO. LAWSON, Esq. Clinical Ass. to Royal London Ophth. Hosp. relates (*Lancet*, Sept. 8th), the two following cases which were advantageously treated by the plan.

Case 1.—R. E.—aged 31, a tall, thin, and rather delicate man, of temperate habits. Has never had any serious illness, but for the last sixteen months has complained greatly of debility, lassitude, and a disinclination to do any work. He suffers as often as two or three times in the week from nocturnal emissions, and feels very low and nervous. A few weeks ago, he accidentally discovered that with the left eye he was unable to distinguish objects, or to read the largest type. On looking at the eye, the cornea is seen to be very conical, with a distinct small central softening. The apex is opaque. He can distinguish a hand held in front of him, but he is unable with the affected eye to count the fingers. He cannot distinguish the markings or the hands on a watch.

On the 30th of November, I drew the pupil downwards and inwards, fastening it in this position by Mr. Critchett's method of tying it with a fine ligature of silk.

Dec. 3d.—I performed a similar operation upwards and inwards.

His sight was greatly improved by this procedure. He was enabled to count fingers and to distinguish the features of friends. I saw him about three months ago; he could then count my fingers at a distance of ten or twelve feet, and with difficulty he could make out the time on my watch. The conicity has certainly materially diminished. The right eye was, however, becoming slightly affected, requiring him to use concave glasses.

Case 2.—W. M.—, aged forty-two, a butler; a healthy but delicate looking man, with a very anæmic appearance; married, and has two children. Twelve