

*Case of extensive fracture of the Os Frontis, with escape of a portion of the Cerebral Substance.—Recovery.* By J. WISTAR WALKER, M. D., of Chesterfield Coal Mines, Va.

Marshall, a labourer in the coal mines of Chesterfield county, Virginia, on the sixteenth of October, was precipitated, by the tumbling of coal, forward, and striking his forehead, an extensive fracture of the frontal bone was produced. Being, at the time of the accident, out of my neighbourhood, my assistance was not procured until seven hours after the injury was received. I found the entire integuments covering the frontal, and a part of the temporal, and parietal bones, turned back, and a fracture extending from the centre of the left squamous portion of the temporal bone horizontally across to the nasal protuberance of the frontal, there taking a line upwards and backwards, forming an acute angle with the last mentioned fracture. Just at this place a triangular piece of bone, embracing the frontal protuberance of the left side, was driven in upon the brain, and encroached upon the longitudinal sinus of the *dura mater*, lacerating many of the smaller vessels of the brain and its membranes, and separating from the cerebral mass a portion of its substance.

Having no trepanning instruments at hand, I attempted, and succeeded, with instruments entirely unfit for the purpose, in elevating and accurately adjusting the fractured and depressed pieces of skull, completing the operation by securing the scalp with the interrupted suture.

The patient's mind was composed. After giving the necessary directions I left the patient, and did not see him again in twelve hours, at which time I was surprised and gratified to find him doing well; his pulse was about 75; the uneasiness about the head did not amount to pain; his mind was perfectly clear.

I directed a saline cathartic, and almost total abstinence from nourishment, dark room, &c. At my next visit I found the patient quiet and free from pain; pulse natural. This condition continued for some four or five days, when, on paying him a visit, I found considerable arterial excitement; the uneasiness about the head (probably) a little increased. I abstracted from the arm about fourteen ounces of blood, and directed a dose of sulphate of magnesia. The dietetic regulations were now more strenuously enforced. Upon my next visit I was much delighted to find that the remedies used at my last, had acted happily; the pulse was reduced to the normal standard; the pain in the head relieved; a satisfactory operation upon the bowels, and at this, for the first time, I entertained hope for his recovery. The above were the only depletory means used throughout the entire management of the case. At this time (seven or eight weeks after the accident), the patient is doing well; the external wound is nearly healed, requiring, only, the *argent. nitras* occasionally to keep down the fungous granulations. The patient is walking about apparently as well as ever.

There has been nothing like hebetude of mind whilst awake, nor confused dreams and wanderings during sleep, which was generally uninterrupted as far as I could ascertain.

Dec. 4, 1848.