

CASE
OF
DISLOCATION OF THE HIP.
TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL
JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—The following case presents a fortunate if not the only mode of reduction applicable, and I offer it to the notice of the profession as not described by our best authorities. If my reasoning be correct, it will serve to account for cases where sometimes the reduction has been ascribed to the lucky movement of the limbs after the failure of the ordinary means.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
H. CLARK, M.D.,
Surgeon to the Royal South Hants Infirmary.
Southampton, Nov. 29, 1843.

Henry Moore, aged twenty-two years, a well made man, but not particularly robust, was admitted into the infirmary Nov. 9, with dislocation of the left femur backwards; and the history of the case, as taken from the note-book of Mr. Alfred Stace, the house-surgeon, is as follows:—

“He is what is called a coalrunner, and was employed at the time of the accident in clearing some bales of cochineal from the hold of one of the West India mail steam ships. He was in the act of raising himself from a stooping posture, when a bale, which had been hoisted to the height of eighteen or twenty feet, fell, and, striking him on the face, knocked him down, forcing the left leg violently behind the other. On attempting to raise himself, he found he was unable to do so, and was immediately taken to the infirmary. The weight of the bale of cochineal was 3 cwt.

“On admission, an hour and a half after the injury, the signs of dislocation of the femur on the dorsum ilii were well marked. There was an unnatural flattening of the parts over the hip-joint; the trochanter was distinctly felt above the position of that of the opposite side, and nearer to the anterior notch of the ileum; pain was felt at a spot a little behind the great trochanter when in its natural situation; the knee was directed across, and in front of the other; the toes and feet were turned inwards, the former resting on the right instep, and the limb was altogether considerably shortened. Extension and abduction could not be performed, and flexion on the pelvis only to a limited extent. Dr. Clark, the surgeon of the week was quickly on the spot, and the treatment was commenced within half an hour of the man’s admission.”

The first attempt at reduction was made by placing the patient on his right side, at the left edge of the bed, when the pelvis was firmly secured by a round towel to the frame of the bedstead beneath. Then the lateral extension was made by another towel passed on the inside of the thigh and over the shoulders of a man who stood over him, so as to draw directly upwards; but in this position the oblique traction of the limb being imperfectly practicable, I placed him on his back at the right side of the bed, and secured the pelvis to the bedstead on this side. The round towel was then carried from the upper

part of the inside of the left thigh round the hips of a man, who with his feet against the opposite edge of the bed, and steadying himself with his hands against the wall behind, was enabled to exert continued powerful extension, while another exerted similar force (by a towel bound tightly round the thigh just about the knee and passed over his own shoulders) in a direction downwards and obliquely across the other thigh. During this operation I held down the pelvis, and with the assistance of Mr. Stace endeavoured to effect the reduction. Finding that nothing was gained by our united efforts, with the powerful exertions of two strong men thus directed, it occurred to me that, failing in the use of this great force (which was doubtless ineffectual from its insufficiency), if I placed the limb in a position to favor the return of the head of the bone, I might avoid the resistance of those powerful muscles we were operating against in the usual way. The indication clearly was to elevate the head of the bone from behind the head of the acetabulum, and this I considered I might accomplish by using the femur as a lever, its form especially assisting the intention; I, therefore, directed the assistants to let the limb loose. I again examined it by flexion, rotation, and comparison with the other leg, and found its condition to be the same as at first, and that it could not be rotated outwards beyond a certain point, from the head of the os femoris coming firmly against the dorsum ilii. I now flexed the knee to a right angle, which raised the thigh to an angle of about forty-five degrees with the bed, perhaps near a right angle with regard to the pelvis; and, by bringing the foot in contact with the other leg, while the knee was sustained in a perpendicular direction, it is manifest that the femur was rotated, and the trochanter major thrown outwards, the head alone then resting on the ileum behind the acetabulum, which cavity, with the axis of the femur through its head, neck, and shaft, were now nearly on the same plane; in this relative position of the parts, by throwing the limb outwards, the head of the bone, it is fair to infer, would start forwards to its natural situation; and such was the gratifying termination of the case, with no more force than was necessary to abduct the limbs. The pelvis still fixed to the right side of the bed, admitted of no change; the heel rested on the bed, as above, while I stood on the left side of the patient, with my right hand on the hip-joint, and my left holding the knee; thus the reduction was readily and audibly effected as I drew the limb towards me.

The present method of making soda from common salt was discovered by Le Blanc at the end of the last century. It was a rich boon for France, and became of the highest importance during the wars of Napoleon. In a very short time it was manufactured to an extraordinary extent, especially at the seat of the soap manufactories. Marseilles possessed for a time a monopoly of soap and soda. The policy of Napoleon deprived that city of the advantages derived from that great source of commerce, and thus excited the hostility of the population to his dynasty, which became favorable to the restoration of the Bourbons.—*Liebig's Letters.*