

tained on the stomach, and produced two or three copious evacuations from the hitherto constipated bowels.

July 6th. There has been scarcely any vomiting since the last report; but he has occasional attacks of pain, lasting an hour or two. They do not, however, exhibit any appreciable connexion with the scanty meals mentioned above; but occur indifferently before and after the ingestion of this food. On one occasion, he has brought up about a teaspoonful of blood, with about a quarter of a pint of an acid fluid. Tongue still furred as before. Ordered to vary the preceding diet, by substituting ground rice, sago, and tapioca, for the arrow-root.

July 10th. He has had very little pain in the epigastrium since the last report, though the pain in the spine is somewhat increased. Complains of the monotony of his diet. Ordered to take a small quantity of strong cold beef-tea; and repeat it twice or even thrice daily, if well borne by the stomach. A blister to be applied to the painful region of the spine. Omit the morphia.

July 13th. An egg which he has been allowed to take since the last report, beaten up in a little cold tea, brought on severe vomiting. With this exception, however, there has been no vomiting, and scarcely any pain, during the last four days. His tongue is much cleaner; and he is sensible of much less pain in lying on the left side. States that he feels greatly improved. The beef-tea seems not to cause the slightest uneasiness. To take eight grains of the citrate of iron thrice daily, in an ounce of distilled water.

July 17th. No pain or vomiting since the last report. The soreness and tenderness to pressure on the epigastric region have also greatly diminished. Ordered on no account to repeat the manipulation on which he founded this statement.

July 24th. Tongue much cleaner. In all other respects, remains as at last report.

From this time, his diet was gradually enlarged; and his amendment steadily continued up to the period of his discharge from the hospital, at the end of August, or about six weeks from the cessation of the pain and vomiting. He was requested to continue attendance as an out-patient.

A few weeks after his discharge, he returned to the hospital, apparently in much the same state as when first admitted. He stated that he had received an injury of the leg, for which, among other remedies, a surgeon who attended him had prescribed some pills, apparently of a drastic purgative nature. They had made him extremely sick, and purged him; since which the pain and vomiting had returned, and were, in his opinion, as bad as ever.

There was not much reason to expect a very successful result from treating a man of his habits and circumstances as an out-patient: and, owing to want of room in the hospital, he could not be readmitted that day as an in-patient. On the day fixed for his admission, he failed to come: and since then I have seen him no more.

REMARKS. I have already alluded to all that seems worth noticing with respect to the diagnosis in this case: and, in the instances previously reported in this JOURNAL, the outlines of the above plan of treatment have been sufficiently explained. Hence there are few points of any practical importance left for me to notice.

The influence of intemperance in the production of gastric ulcer is once which can only be established by the careful collection and analysis of a large number of cases. But habits of this kind seem to be so frequently connected with the occurrence of this lesion for the first time in strong and well-nourished men of middle age, that it is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion that such an influence often does obtain. And the instance under consideration offers us a good example of this coincidence.

The manner in which the symptoms were suddenly aggravated by an error of diet, such as would perhaps hardly be expected to give rise to very marked results, is especially interesting. Where, as in this case, the general health and state of the constitution do not contraindicate so restricted a diet, I think we can hardly do better at first than adhere punctiliously to the simple regimen originally prescribed

by Cruveilhier; into which we may afterwards gradually introduce the various alterations mentioned above.

The blister in this case had, as is not infrequent, a marked influence in diminishing the dorsal pain.

Was the patient's account of his relapse a true one, especially as regards the cause to which he attributed the return of his symptoms? From what I have often seen in such cases, I should be disposed to think it might be. Once or twice I have known the symptoms of an ulcer of the stomach greatly exaggerated by a dose of salts, an aloetic mixture, or a pill containing a grain or two of calomel, with three or four of the compound extract of colocynth: in fact, by such an aperient as few would hesitate to prescribe, supposing the exact nature of the malady unknown to them. Examples of this kind teach us, I think, almost to limit our selection of aperients to castor oil and enemata. The beneficial effects of the latter are generally restricted to the unloading so small an extent of the large intestine, that we are often obliged to use some more efficient aperient. But I have never known the castor oil do any mischief; and believe that even constant vomiting is scarcely a valid contraindication of its use.

Lastly, the above case well illustrates some of the difficulties which frequently attend the treatment of this malady; especially among the classes who form the majority of our hospital patients. There is often no way of administering the necessary diet and regimen except by the most careful discipline and attention in the wards of an hospital. And even after thus effecting what seems to be a cure, the patient sometimes returns on our hands, reduced by accident, disobedience, or intemperance, to a state which again taxes all that our care or skill can bestow, with what is now scarcely any hope of a permanent cure.

Whether the ulcer had really cicatrised in the above case, it is, of course, impossible absolutely to certify: but from the gradual nature of the amendment, and the length of time during which the symptoms had been completely interrupted, it is probable that it had thus healed. I have known a similar intermission last many months (instead of six weeks), and yet a single large meal of unusually indigestible food has brought back the whole train of symptoms, ending in the speedy death of the patient.

Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, Dec. 24th, 1855.

## ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

### MASS OF HAIR FOUND IN THE STOMACH.

By GEORGE MAY, jun., Esq., Surgeon to the Royal Berks Hospital.

SOME months ago, I was requested to visit Mrs. Eaton, of Woodley, aged 26 years. She was ill from a slight attack of peritonitis; and her history was, that about three years previously, she began to suffer from pain in the left hypochondriac region, and soon noticed a hard swelling near the umbilicus, but a little to the left of the median line.

At the time I saw her, the tumour occupied the situation of the distended stomach, which it closely resembled in shape, the abrupt curve at the pylorus being distinctly marked. It was hard, with a defined and rounded margin, and appeared to be slightly moveable; but its partial adhesion to the abdominal walls caused any attempt to move it to be very painful. The abdomen above the tumour was tympanitic, and the margin of the liver could be distinctly traced. She looked unhealthy, had lost flesh, and occasionally vomited; but, with the exception of some attacks of peritonitis, did not suffer much pain. She gradually became weaker, and, during the last week of her life, was troubled by diarrhoea and constant vomiting, and died from exhaustion.

On a *post mortem* examination, the stomach was found adherent to the abdominal wall, and in it was a mass of hair, composed of numerous small hairs matted together

**By-ones.** The concretion measured twenty inches in its longest and twelve in its shortest circumference, and weighed twenty-six ounces; but now that it is dry, it weighs ten ounces.

On removing her wig, the head was found to be covered with short hairs, the longest not exceeding an inch in length. Her sister then told me that the deceased had been in the habit of swallowing her hair ever since she was about four years old, but that this habit had not attracted much attention.

She had been under the care of several medical men, by whom the stomach, pancreas, omentum, and liver, had been in turn named as the seat of mischief. I had some difficulty in satisfying myself that the stomach and not the omentum was the part affected, but at last decided in favour of the stomach; partly from the situation of the tumour, but principally from the small space between the tumour and the liver being resonant on percussion. I could not convince myself of its malignant character; for, although eight inches in length, and with a sharp curve at the pyloric end of the stomach, it did not appear to affect either the cardiac or pyloric orifices, and its smooth and rounded margin was very unlike cancer.

This case resembles one reported by Dr. Ritchie, in the ninth volume of the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal*; and if the idea of a concretion in the stomach had occurred to me, it ought to have been diagnosed without difficulty. Cloquet, in his recent monograph on intestinal concretions, mentions that masses of hair are only found in insane patients; but Mrs. Eaton did not exhibit any trace of mental alienation, and the habit of swallowing her hair commenced at a very early age.

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## Association Medical Journal.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28TH, 1855.

### MEDICAL REFORM: THE DEPUTATION TO SIR GEORGE GREY.

On Thursday, the 20th instant, the Reform Committee of the Association had the interview with the Home Secretary which they have been for some time expecting. The appointment was originally made for the Tuesday preceding, and we gave notice to that effect in a previous number; but on the very evening of the publication of that number, Mr. Hastings received a notification from the Home-office that the proposed interview was, from unavoidable circumstances, to be postponed till the 20th. We fear that the announcement, in the *JOURNAL* may have caused inconvenience to some of our readers; but we are anxious to state that the only available means of communicating with the Association generally, that of advertising, was promptly adopted. No medical periodical being published in the interval between Friday and Tuesday, a notice of the postponement was inserted each day in the columns of the *Times*.

The actual result of the interview with the Home Secretary, the proceedings at which were briefly reported in our last number, and more fully in the present one, must be considered as decidedly favourable to the cause of Medical Reform. Some disappointment may be felt, perhaps, by those who have been very sanguine in their expectations, that Sir George Grey did not pledge the Government to take up the

subject immediately, and legislate upon it off-hand. But those who were less hopeful in their views, or who were better acquainted with the amount of labour thrown just at present on the hands of Government, have good reason to be satisfied with the sentiments expressed and the promises made by Sir George before the deputation left him. The value to be attached to the words of a minister of state, and the deductions to be drawn from the expressions which fall from him, must depend in a great degree upon the character of the man. Some statesmen are in the habit of making fluent promises of assistance to everybody who asks their aid, and contrive to dismiss every deputation that waits on them with a conviction that all its wants and wishes are to be gratified instantaneously. Sir George Grey does not belong to this delusive class. He is not apt to make promises; but what he does say he is sure to adhere to. And what he said to the Committee on the 20th was, as far as it went, all in favour of the views held by the Association. He admitted the necessity of legislating for Medical Reform; he stated that the interests of the public and of the profession, and not those of any corporate bodies, were what he himself should look to; he expressed an opinion that Mr. Headlam's bill was better calculated than any he had before seen to settle the question in a satisfactory manner; and he promised that he would, individually, both consult with Mr. Headlam on the measure, and also do anything in his power to further its passing through Parliament. These expressions are the more to be thought of, because they were not the cut and dried protestations with which politicians frequently approach a subject in which they take no real interest; but they were the result of a long conversation, in which the importance and urgency of Medical Reform were argued and evidently impressed on the mind of the Home Secretary.

It must be remembered that, in some respects, the advantages are on the side of the introduction of the Bill by a private member. If the Government bring in a measure of their own, it would no doubt be more easily passed through the House, and the opposition to it would be more speedily quelled; but then medical reformers must in that case be content with the terms which Government may impose on them. If, on the other hand, our own Bill is laid on the table of the Commons, we obtain the advantage, great whatever may be the issue, of thoroughly ventilating the whole subject in Parliament, and of pressing on the legislature our own claims in our own way. Even if unsuccessful in this next session, we shall only be worsted for a time, and not beaten; and assuredly we shall find that in the case of Medical Reform, as in all other questions, public discussion is sure to bring out the truth, and to make the ultimate triumph of justice a question of time only.

We are happy to be able to state that Mr. Headlam is ready and anxious to persevere with his measure; and that, relying on the hearty support of the Association, he intends to re-introduce the Bill on the earliest opportunity after the meeting of Parliament. A great deal must then depend on the vigour and unanimity which we may bring to bear on the struggle; and as the Reform Committee have shewn themselves steady to their trust and unwearied in their exertions, we earnestly hope that they may find their hands strengthened in the day of battle by a united and zealous Association.