

CONGENITAL ABSENCE OF THE CRYSTAL-
LINE LENS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

The following description of congenital affection of the eyes, although not occurring in the human subject, appears worthy of record in the pages of the *Provincial Journal*.

I remain, Sir, your obedient Servant,

AUGUSTIN PRICHARD.

Red Lodge, Bristol,

March 22, 1849.

The subject was a calf, born blind, and unable to follow its mother about: according to the account of the butcher, being totally blind; and the examination of the eyes after the animal was killed shows that, if it had any power of vision whatever, it must have been merely the power of distinguishing light from darkness.

Both eyes were smaller than calves eyes usually are, and both presented, externally, opacity of the cornea, to which the iris was evidently adherent. In one there were three small surfaces of adhesion, in the other only one; the rest of the cornea was transparent. In one eye the pupil was visible, but in the other (in which there were the three opacities,) it could not be distinguished through the cornea. The iris was much thinned at the adherent points, so much so as to render it doubtful whether it existed there at all, or whether it was not the separation of the ciliary border of the iris from its attachments, allowing the ciliary processes to bulge forwards into the anterior chamber, as far as the cornea. The margin of the pupil was almost entirely adherent to the subjacent parts; in one eye the aperture had its natural size, in the other it was very much contracted. The choroid and retina were healthy, but upon dividing them, so as to turn out the contents of the globe, it became evident that there was no lens. The posterior surface of the iris was in contact with, and adherent to, the anterior surface of the hyaloid membrane. The ciliary processes were present; and in one eye the capsule of the lens was tolerably distinct, in the other it was not to be found. The lines upon the anterior surface of the vitreous body, called "the ciliary zone of Zinn," were in the usual form. The vitreous humour itself was perfectly transparent. The condition of the eyes was therefore the following:—Absence of the lens, synechia anterior and posterior, (adhesion of the iris in front and behind,) and staphyloma of the cornea and iris.

It appears to me most probable, that there was at one period of intra-uterine life, an escape and loss of the crystalline lens, and that the other changes were the result of the subsequent inflammatory process, at any rate the state of the organs, as far as their external appearance went, very much resembled the eyes of those who have met with an accident, and lost the lens through an aperture at the edge of the cornea, leaving the healing process to nature.

Cases of congenital diseases occur sufficiently frequently, both in the eyes and other organs, to render it quite certain that the fœtus is subject to most, if not all, the complaints by which the body may be affected after birth.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 1849.

We avail ourselves of the present opportunity to direct the attention of our readers in a more special manner to the notice inserted in the last number of this Journal, respecting the therapeutical value of cod-liver oil in phthisis pulmonalis. It will, we are assured, be readily conceded, that there is no subject upon which the combined experience of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association can be brought to bear, of deeper interest to humanity, than one in any manner connected with that devastating malady, and we trust that Dr. Ranking's appeal to the individual experience of such of our associates as are familiar with the effects of cod-liver oil in its treatment, will meet with a ready response.

We are the more earnest in our wishes on this matter, because we are confident that the enlightened body of practitioners, of which this Association is composed, is capable of affording a mass of valuable information on any point, such as no other section of the profession could produce, and we should therefore regard the results of their communications with much interest. We need not remind them that in according their aid towards the elucidation of the question proposed, they will be carrying out one of the main objects of the Association.

As far as we understand Dr. Ranking's request, it will not involve any great degree of trouble on the part of those who may favour him with communications. He is anxious to have information on the following points:—

1. The number of cases in which the oil has been exhibited, with the proportion of successful and unsuccessful cases.

2. The stage at which the oil has been exhibited, whether in the incipient or advanced.

For convenience sake it may be advisable to divide the cases of phthisis into three stages—the *incipient*, in which the tubercular matter is not softened, as indicated by the following signs:—Slight depression and immobility of the subclavicular regions, with rough, jerking, or deficient respiration, and some dulness on percussion; the second, in which the tubercular matter is softening, the signs being as before, with the exception that the respiratory