

RECORD OF CASES.

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Case of Double Consciousness.

In the spring of 1831 my attention was called to a very singular nervous affection, of which I subjoin some memoranda. It was considered by me, and so named at the time, an unusual form of hysteria. I afterwards found that similar cases have been arranged by Dr. Abercrombie under a specific title, that of "double consciousness." It also possesses common points with the remarkable states produced by the manipulations of the mesmerisers.

April 1831.—Elizabeth Moffat, resident at Tunbridge Wells, a healthy girl, aged about 18, having swallowed by mistake some Unguentum Lyttæ, a long train of symptoms of pain and irritation in the head, thoracic region, and bladder, ensued. These gradually subsided, but left an extreme susceptibility of pain in the head from either sound or contact, so that in either case she readily became insensible, particularly from pressure on the vertex. On this physical state the following mental phenomena supervened. She appeared to pass alternately, and in succession, through two different states of mental existence, or rather, I might say, her normal state was exchanged for an abnormal one, which I shall presently describe, out of which she would return, sometimes after it had lasted some weeks, into the normal one,—her passages from either state into the other occurring suddenly. The phenomena of her abnormal state were those of extreme excitement, entirely dissimilar to her natural habit, which was dull and quiet. Under this state she made considerable progress in needle-work, and in many points of intellectual acquirement, far beyond the energy and ability of her normal condition. She became also lively and spirited in conversation. At the same time she lost her consciousness of her relation to her father and mother, and former associates, calling them by wrong names. She was, however, at no time incoherent. On the subsidence of her abnormal state, her recollection of her father, mother, and friends, in

their just relation to her, would return, and she would resume her quiet and dull character; she would also resume her true position and respectful manners towards some ladies of Tunbridge Wells, from whom she was receiving kindness and instruction; meanwhile, in both her states, the normal and abnormal one, the associations which have taken place in each are obstinately retained without the smallest confusion, but in each with a total oblivion of what has been learnt in the other state. Thus, in her normal state, she will have entirely forgotten all those manual or intellectual acquirements which she may have made during that of excitement, and every attempt to instruct her in these points will utterly fail.

From the scantiness of my notes, and an unwillingness to trust my memory, I am unable to supply adequate particulars of this case: for instance, I cannot answer the question, under what conditions, whether from pressure on the vertex, the transition from one state into the other seemed to occur? I can affirm, generally, that the case received no benefit from medical measures, that it gradually lost its mental peculiarities, and the normal state became permanent. But in the meanwhile circumstances of misconduct in the girl's relatives were discovered, which led to an impression among her patrons at Tunbridge Wells that the case was an imposture; and, fortunately perhaps for the patient, it was left to itself.

I have observed that a suspicion of simulation in the above case occasioned it to be dismissed with unbelief. It is probable that a more scrutinising eye ought to have been applied throughout the inquiry into it. But does the discovery of simulation in hysterical disease, to which the above case is analogous, involve a total rejection of every other symptom of that state? I say, of every other symptom, for simulation itself is a symptom of hysteria, though not an inseparable one. What is more common than to see young persons become deceitful, to the extent, *exempli gratia*, of pretending incapacity to take food, while they are covertly taking articles of indigestible food to a great quantity? The mental pathology of that state is fully as singular as its physical. I do not believe that Elizabeth Moffat could have simulated all

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT SPECIAL DISEASES OF THE SKIN.

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ACNE.

WHETHER we consider the frequency of its occurrence, the disfigurement it occasions, or the obstinate and chronic form it frequently assumes, there are few diseases of the skin better deserving the attention of the medical practitioner than Acne.

The frequency of the occurrence of acne is such, that few people reach the middle period of life without having had an occasional attack of it; though, in the great majority of instances, in too trifling a form to require medical treatment. The disfigurement it occasions is such, as not infrequently, when occurring in persons moving in the higher ranks of society, to embitter life; and in the lower classes, as amongst servants for instance, to prevent the patient gaining a livelihood. And the rebellious character that it assumes is such, that it is by no means uncommon to meet with cases that have for eight, ten, or even more years, resisted all plans of treatment that have been adopted for their relief.

The physical characters of acne are so well known to every practitioner, that it would be superfluous to give any very detailed account of them here; the more so, as it is not my intention to enter upon anything like a complete history of the disease, but rather to direct attention to certain points in its etiology and treatment, that appear to me to be of peculiar interest, and of direct practical importance.

The best and most practical classification of the varieties of acne is that by Gibert, who divides this disease into Acne disseminata, A. rosacea, and Mentagra. Willan and Bateman, followed by many of the more modern writers on the diseases of the skin, have divided acne into four species; but as the characters on which this division is founded are for the most part unimportant and transitory, being dependent on trifling modifications in the appearance, progress, and activity of the disease, they do not deserve to be

the phenomena of her case; and when I find that case, singular as it is, forming one under an assigned medical head on the authority of an eminent pathologist, I more readily give some weight to my own convictions on this subject.

Much of the above reasoning has a bearing on that train of symptoms which I have adverted to as having common points with the above case; I mean, the trance produced by the manipulations of the mesmerisers. Is it philosophical to decline inquiry into these symptoms, because they may have occasionally been exaggerated, or even put on, when adequate evidence is afforded of their general reality by unbiased and numerous observers? But if this question cannot be answered affirmatively, let me put another, with the same intention, which naturally springs out of it. Is it wise in us, who desire to obtain for our tripartite profession exclusive privileges from the legislature, to prove that we are unworthy of these privileges, by refusing inquiry into practices which offer on extensive authority an antidote to pain and irritation in their direct forms? We allow our nurses to rock our infants to sleep. Are we to be told, that it is absurd and unjustifiable to produce a form of sleep during which pain is unfelt, and irritation allayed, by movements of the hands? Yet such a proposition I have heard maintained by an eminent and valued member of our profession in a wise and learned assembly.

I allude here to the ordinary phenomena of mesmerism—the trance, which the operators in these cases appear to have the power of producing and terminating at will. Unless we propose to establish a new theory of the value and effect of testimony on belief, or of the utility and desirableness of adding to our means of subduing pain and irritation, it is our duty to give a patient and candid inquiry into this subject, and to profit by it, if we may.

[To be continued.]

In the 48th year of the reign of Henry the Third, as appears from the patent rolls of that year, quoted by Philpot, the King granted a free pardon to Frances de Balsham, for that she was hanged for felony at Canterbury, from nine of the clock on Monday to the rising of the sun next day, and yet was still alive!