A CASE
OF
RECOVERY FROM CUT THROAT,
IN WHICH BOTH THE LARYNX AND PHARYNX WERE EXTENSIVELY OPENED.

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JOHN SIMMONS, aged twenty-five, the unfortunate subject of this case, was a servant out of place, who in a fit of derangement, determined to commit suicide. With a razor he divided the larynx in full half its circumference, exactly between the os hyoides and thyroid cartilage, exposing its internal surface without wounding any important blood-vessel. He was brought into the St. Marylebone Infirmary by a policeman, October the 21st, 1839, and appeared in a very exhausted condition ; having a feeble pulse and cold extremities. The wound had been dressed by another surgeon, and therefore it was not opened. The man expressed great penitence and contrition for the act he had committed.

He was consigned to the care of proper attendants, and directed to be kept warm in bed, and to have nutritious fluids, such as beef tea, milk, &c., &c.

As some cerebral excitement came on, twelve leeches were applied to the temples; the head was shaved and kept cool by an evaporating lotion, and an aperient medicine combined with a small quantity of tartarized antimony was given to him.

In the middle of the second night, whilst the back of the nurse who had been ordered to watch him was turned, he made an attempt to open the wound with an old blunt knife which he had secreted; and succeeded so far as to divide the sutures of the former wound, and to cut on into the pharynx. No vessel of any consequence was injured, and he coughed up only a little blood. The wound was brought together by two sutures, with the view of preventing the wide gaping which otherwise would have taken place, and it was lightly dressed. He breathed through the mouth.

From this period the food escaped through the wound in the pharynx, and it was necessary for him to be fed by an elastic tube being passed down the œsophagus into the stomach. The cerebral excitement and fever increased, and continued for several days. He was kept under strict restraint. Blood was frequently abstracted from the neighbourhood of the head: he was blistered and purged; took sudorifics; used freezing lotions and the cold douche; and at length symptoms of effusion into the ven-

tricles and pressure on the brain, being by stupor and dilated pupils indicated, he was salivated by mercurial friction. The head-symptoms from this treatment gradually subsided, but he was left extremely weak. Quinine, wine and nutritous diet were administered, and his strength increased. The wounds now began to heal. The wound of the pharynx being the lesser, first closed up, and afterwards that of the larynx. On the 9th of December the whole wound was completely cicatrized, but the voice of the patient was lost, and he could only speak in a whisper.

The remarkable feature in this case is, that so extensive a wound of the larynx and pharynx should have healed. It is so uncommon, that I have been unable to find another case of the kind recorded.

The obstinate determination of this man also to commit suicide is no less remarkable. We were informed when he was brought to the infirmary, that he had attempted it twice before; and when he left the hospital after his recovery, he was found suspended by the neck in a hovel at Dulwich; where, from the decomposition of the body, he must have been hanging for more than a month.