LOOSE BODIES IN THE KNEE-JOINT.

By T. PRIDGIN TEALE, M.A., F.R.C.S.

In fulfilment of my promise, I beg to record the following cases, which tend to corroborate the opinion of those who think that occasionally, as the result of injury, a piece of articular cartilage with a corresponding portion of bone may become detached, and give rise to the ordinary symptoms of loose cartilage. Further, such a loose body may be removed from the joint, with as complete a recovery as in the case of simple nodule of cartilage. The first, the case read by my father before the Medico-Chirurgical Society (December 11th, 1885) has been most fully and adequately quoted by Mr. Howard Marsh, in the JOURNAL of April 14th. In this case a blow on the knee was followed in twelve months by sudden lameness and the discovery of a loose body in the joint. It was unfortunately proved *post mortem* that the loose body was a piece of articular cartilage and bone which accurately fitted a shallow cavity in the outer condyle of the femur.

The next case was under my own care at the Leeds Infirmary, and was as follows: J. J., aged 25, a mechanic, on December 4th,

Fig. 1.—Smooth surface, covered by articular cartilage. Broken surface, showing cancellous bone.

Fig. 2.—Posterior surface of patella, as judged by touch.

1881, caught his foot in a rut, giving the knee a severe wrench, and fell on his hands and knees. By no questioning could any evidence be obtained tending to show that the fall was the result of some foreign body in the joint. With great difficulty, by hopping and leaning against the wall, he reached home. The joint was much swollen immediately, and excessively painful. The patient said that he felt something loose in the joint. Next day, December 5th, he was admitted into the Leeds Infirmary. The joint was swollen, painful, tender to the touch, and especially to pressure over the inner margin of the patella. The house-surgeon, Mr. Edward Ward, thinking that the case might be one of displaced semilunar cartilage, tried the usual manipulation of flexion and extension, with the effect of producing great pain and no amelioration.

December 14th. The dresser discovered a loose body in the joint.

December 21st. The joint was opened, and a loose body, consisting of cartilage and a thin layer of bone (Fig. 1) was removed. On

exploring the joint with the finger, there was discovered on the posterior surface of the patella a shallow cavity which exactly corresponded in size and shape with the piece of cartilage and bone removed (Fig. 2).

The patient recovered well; sat up on January 11th, left the hospital on the 14th (the twenty-fifth day after the operation), and on March 12th came to the hospital. "There was no trace of a limp. He could flex the knee to a right angle, and was able to do heavy work with perfect ease."

The next case was under the care of my colleague Mr. Atkinson, with whose permission it is published. In this there is an absence of any evidence of preceding injury.

J. R., a patient in the Leeds Infirmary. On October 7th, 1886, Mr. Atkinson removed two loose cartilages from the left knee and one from the right. There was a history of frequent attacks of pain and swelling of both knee-joints extending over a period of seven years, but not of any severe injury.

January, 1887. He was again admitted into the Leeds Infirmary, as another cartilage had been discovered in the right knee. The cartilage was removed.

On January 31st the knee was excised, and the following condition was discovered (Fig. 3). A piece of articular cartilage about three-quarters of an inch square was partially detached

Fig. 3.—a, detached cartilage; b, surface of femur, showing bone, uncovered by cartilage.

from the external side of the inner condyle, being attached chiefly at the upper part of its internal border, close to the inter-condyloid notch, by a portion of cartilage and synovial membrane forming a sort of hinge, which allowed the piece of cartilage to flap backwards and forwards. The patient recovered.

THE HOSPITALS ASSOCIATION.—The fourth annual general meeting of the Hospitals Association will be held at the Town Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday next, at 5 P.M., to receive the annual report of the council, etc. The chair will be taken by Dr. J. S. Bristowe, F.R.S., the President, who will deliver an address. Cards of admission can be obtained of the Secretary, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, W.C.

A MESSAGE has been received from the Home Office, reprieving Dr. Burke, who was to have been executed for the murder of his daughter, aged 9, by shooting her. He afterwards shot himself. The reprieve, it is stated, had been petitioned for chiefly by medical men.