of the rectum. The surgeon's hand through the rectal tube has been utilised in *post mortem* examinations for the abstraction of the kidneys and other small viscera: I mention this only to express my regret that any such underhand examination has been necessitated, by reason of friends negating an essential but disagreeable duty of our profession in the pursuit of truth.

REMARKS ON THE TREATMENT OF TINEA TONSURANS.

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THERE are numerous agents which seem to have more or less active influence in the treatment of ringworm; some being advocated by some practitioners as superior to others, while these again have their own supporters. The spores of the trichophyton appear to resemble the microspores lately examined by Professor Tyndall in their obstinate resistance to destruction; and the successful treatment of cases of tinea tonsurans clearly depends on determining whether it is possible to destroy these spores, or whether, by preventing their germination for a certain period, the disease practically cures itself. The observation of some troublesome cases of ringworm which had been under various kinds of treatment without much benefit, suggested a plan of treatment which excluded the possibility of destroying the trichophyton spores, and only had for its object the arrest of proliferation of the germs. The question of the destruction of microspores is one which perhaps does not present itself as quite a different question from the prevention of their development. An example will illustrate what is meant. If we take a solution containing bacteria, such, for instance, as that in which bladders are prepared for museum purposes, the odour of which is singularly powerful, and add to it a certain quantity of carbolic acid solution of the strength of 1 in 40, we shall find that the active living organisms which exist in the former will be instantly destroyed and the odour removed. If we do the same thing with a solution of salicylic acid of full strength (water absorbs only about 1 in 400) the organisms are not destroyed and the odour is not removed; that is to say, salicylic acid will not destroy well-developed bacteria. But salicylic acid will prevent them from developing, as is proved by the fact that we may preserve animal or vegetable matter from decomposition by treating it with solution of the acid. We thus see the importance of distinguishing between agents which destroy bacteria and microspores, and those which simply prevent their development; and there is no doubt that those who have been studying this most interesting subject by clinical, microscopical, or physical methods are well aware of the importance of ascertaining the conditions which favour or arrest the development of different species of germs; clearly a stage in the inquiry beyond that of the extent to which the germs may be destroyed by various agents.

As it is well known that some of the remedies used for ringworm are less liable to produce inflammation of the skin than others, it is most desirable to give a preference to the former, the production of inflammatory changes seeming rather to retard than promote the action of a remedy. On this principle I have, during the last twelve months, used carbolic acid, the most certain agent for the prevention of the development as well as for the destruction of microspores, with decidedly better results than were observed when iodine, tincture of the sesquichloride of iron, or any other agents had been employed, including Goa powder, which has lately been recommended as superior to most others. There is one important point which must be attended to under any circumstances; and this is, the necessity of much more frequent application of any remedy than is usually considered requisite, for the reason that most species of microspores require only a few hours to advance from one stage of development to another, and that, in order to prevent any increase in the number of the spores, though we may not be able to destroy them, it is absolutely necessary to apply the remedy at intervals of not less than six hours. The best preparation for this purpose is a combination of sulphur and olive-oil in equal parts, to which carbolic acid in the proportion of two grains to the drachm is added. To prevent the contact of the fingers of the person who applies it, and who is liable, without caution, to take hold of a child by the neck or shoulders, and thus produce the disease on other parts, a small sponge or brush should be used. This must be done every four or six hours, the head being washed with Castile soap and warm water night and morning before the application of the carbolised oil. If a stronger solution of the acid be used, as, for instance, in the proportion of 1 to 10, it will be

found that a certain amount of inflammation is produced, and the frequent application of such a mixture cannot long be pursued. After making various experiments of this kind, I have found the preparation given above most satisfactory, and believe that the treatment of ringworm with carbolised sulphur oil may be recommended as superior to any other in common use.

As a matter of experiment, there is no doubt as to the fact that no agent with which we are acquainted is to be compared to carbolic acid for the destruction of organic life without destruction of organic matter, and that no agent is so useful in treating parasitic diseases of the skin, from the fact that, in proportion to its destructive action on the organisms which produce them, it is the least injurious to the cutaneous tissue.

Attention to details is of such importance in the treatment of tinea tonsurans, that it is necessary to add to the above directions the remark that the hair should be cut close with scissors, and that the oil should be rubbed into the skin for a few minutes. The treatment should be continued for at least a fortnight after the disease has apparently been cured. Either of the following prescriptions may be used. The first has the advantage of not becoming thick or dry from evaporation, while the second is cleaner and cheaper.

R Sulphuris precipitati, zinci oxidi, aa ʒj; olei olivæ f. ʒj; acidi carbolic gr. xvi.

R Sulphuris precipitati, zinci oxidi, aa ʒij; glycerini, aquæ, aa f. ʒijj; acidi carbolic gr. xvi.

REPORT OF A CASE OF PARAPLEGIA DEPENDENT UPON SOFTENING OF THE SPINAL CORD.*

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WILLIAM M., aged 42, single, an itinerant herdseller, residing in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was admitted into the Newcastle Infirmary, under my care, November 18th, 1875. He stated that for three weeks he had been unable to pursue his occupation, in consequence of numbness and a prickling feeling of the lower extremities, and from increasing inability to walk, the right leg being weaker than the left; also, that he had suffered from a dull pain in the lumbar and sacral regions of the spine, accompanied with a tight feeling in the abdomen, and at times from cramp of the calves of both legs. He had been much exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather, having to gain his livelihood by attending upon a stall placed in the streets, and in consequence had suffered greatly from coldness of the extremities, especially the lower.

Upon examination, it was found that his spine was curved, convexo-concave in form, the convexity being situated at the dorsal region and the concavity at the lumbar; the convexity being directed backwards and the concavity forwards. The curvature had existed since he was ten years of age. Upon percussion of the spines of the lower dorsal vertebrae, especially the tenth, there was distinct tenderness. When a sponge dipped in warm water was applied to the spine, a burning sensation was complained of about the tenth dorsal vertebra, with a natural sense of heat in the vertebrae above. The passage of a piece of ice over the vertebral column produced a sensation of cold everywhere, except at the level of the tenth dorsal vertebra, at which spot a feeling of heat was experienced. He was able to raise both his legs from the bed, but there was a great tendency to crossing of the legs one over the other, especially the left over the right. When the soles of the feet were tickled, the legs were suddenly jerked from the bed, the right more suddenly and more forcibly than the left. When assisted out of bed, he would have fallen to the ground if he had not been supported, and he was quite unable to move the legs as in the act of progression. The sensation of both feet and legs, as also the temperature, was equal. Both legs were wasted, and the muscles were very flabby. He had full control over the bladder and rectum. The urine was normal in colour, slightly alkaline in reaction, of specific gravity 1028, was free from albumen, but contained an excess of phosphates.

He was ordered to take twenty minims of the liquid extract of ergot, in water, three times each day; and, as the skin over the convexity of the spine and the sacrum was inflamed, he was placed upon air-cushions.

November 29th. He expressed himself as having more power in the legs, also said that the extremities were less numb, but still complained of pain in the lower part of the spine and the tight feeling in the abdomen.

* Read before the North of England Branch.