child is rapidly sinking, in spite of arrowroot, port wine, broth, and the tonic medicine. To-day (13th inst.) the father has requested me to operate, if I see any, even a slight chance of recovery. I consented to do so, provided the child had not materially altered by my visit on the morrow.

14th.—The child is in very great pain; the pulse is 120, soft and small; the bowels are not loose; the surface of the skin moderately cool, but the appetite has failed; she has slept a little through the night; is not at all delirious, is perfectly conscious and converses with her family. Confident that from such a source of irritation nature must soon yield, I considered it incumbent to have recourse to amputation even at the eleventh hour. I amputated the thigh through the centre, by the lateral operation, this morning; the hæmorrhage was exceedingly slight. Four ligatures were required. The flaps brought together in the usual manner, and the child placed in bed. During the operation, which lasted but a few minutes, she fainted, but speedily rallied upon the administration of some port wine. For about half an hour afterwards she appeared to be doing well, her pulse was the same as before the operation. She suddenly jumped up, and when laid down cried loudly to be raised. Complained of pain about the heart, and coldness of the belly. The pulse became smaller, and almost imperceptible. The pupils dilated. In spite of stimulants, external and internal, the body became cold, pneumonia of the dying was evident, and she expired just one hour after the operation.

Remarks.—Had the patient been an adult, I should have performed primary amputation, but knowing the reparatory power of nature in young children, I felt anxious to give her every chance of struggling through the consequences of the injury. I believe, had the operation been consented to four days afterwards, when it was urged upon her parents, that the girl would, in all probability, have recovered.

Leyland, Lancashire, April 17, 1850.

CASE OF

SUPPOSED SPINA BIFIDA SPONTANEOUSLY CURED.

By TOM GUY, Esq., M.R.C.S., THORNE.

LATE in the evening of the 11th December last I was requested to visit F. H., aged 25, a miller, who had from birth a tumour, the size of an infant's head, extending over the spinous and transverse processes of the whole lumbar vertebræ, and from the chafing during the past few days of his illness had caused a small ulcer, which burst, and allowed its contents,—"thin watery fluid, uncommonly offensive,"—to escape. When I saw him he made no complaint, but was low and very weak, and the sac was gradually emptying itself; from time to time it filled again with thicker fluid, and then opened again, at each period getting

smaller, until at last the sides of the sac became closely adherent, and the integuments covering it shrivelled up, so that now nothing remains to appearance but a little hard and thickened skin. I should observe that this patient always had full command over his discharges, but that there was diminution of sensation as well as motion in the lower extremities, and occasional wanderings. The skin covering the tumour delicately thin, and somewhat transparent, and when entirely empty of fluid, an opening, about two inches long, and the sixth of an inch broad, could be felt running down its centre. The gait was awkward, a sort of waddling.

This case was always looked upon as spina bifida, and as soon as an opening occurred, death must inevitably follow.

Observations.—Now, my impression is, since the man has recovered, and without ever having had bad symptoms, that this affection must have been purely local, or if it did ever communicate with the spinal cord and brain, the original opening must have closed years ago, otherwise it could not have terminated so happily for the patient; but nature I apprehend set up the adhesive process, and the sides of the small aperture had become united, so that the channel had ceased to exist. As Sir Astley Cooper suggested, it ought to be attempted by art, should nature not do it. Once I understand he practised this method with advantage and success, yet it is an extremely dangerous experiment.

April 10, 1850.

Provincial Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1850.

THE *Medical Times* again makes us the subject of animadversion in its frantic efforts to bolster up the National Institute. To this we have no manner of objection, as we do not see that the approval of our contemporary is of very vital importance; but we should much prefer, that in any future observations with which he may honour us, he do not accuse us of feelings and motives which exist only in his own imagination. We have long been aware that this *Journal* has been an eyesore to our metropolitan brother, and the suspicion has crossed our minds that he would not be unwilling to replenish a not over-luxuriant exchequer with a slice of the goodly list of subscribers, of whose support we are justly proud, not simply on account of their numbers but in reference to their professional and social weight. We can, however, assure our contemporary that he sadly mistakes the character of the provincial surgeon, if he thinks he is to be seduced from his allegiance by the