internally with a vast number of cells, which readily broke down, and contained a substance, having exactly the consistence, colour, and physical characters of the medullary substance of the brain. A considerable portion of the contents were lost, but a tolerably correct idea may be formed of its original size by consulting the preparation. The examination could not be carried further.

Remarks.—The observations I wish to make upon the case are:—

First. Upon the nature of the tumour. There can be no doubt, I think, upon examining the preparation, and reviewing the character of the tumour, its cellular structure, its white and glossy external appearance, and the peculiar physical properties of the brain-like contents of the cells, and also taking into account its rapid growth, in denominating it *medullary sarcoma*, originating in the prostate gland.

Secondly. I would remark upon the extreme rarity of this form of disease in such a structure, and in so young a subject. I have been unable to find a single analogous case in the works to which I have referred; and I have, therefore, thought it a proper one to record in the annals of our Association. The preparation will be added to the valuable collection of morbid specimens of my friend Mr. Crosse.

Thirdly. With regard to treatment. I think it is obvious that nothing whatever could have been done, and I consider it fortunate that I was able to relieve the little patient's sufferings by the introduction of the catheter, to which operation it is clear a tumour of this kind might have presented a most formidable obstruction.

ON THE EFFICACY OF COUNTER-IRRITATION IN SOME AFFECTIONS OF THE BRAIN.

By JONATHAN TOOGOOD,

Licentiate of the College of Physicians, Fellow of the College of Surgeons, and Consulting Physician and Surgeon to the Bridgewater Infirmary.

In the month of September, 1841, I directed the attention of the Association to the efficacy of counter-irritation, in arresting the progress, and promoting the cure of disease, and adduced several cases proving the advantages of such treatment. Since that period I have had many opportunities of testing the practice, and have been entirely satisfied with its success. Having frequently employed it in severe affections of the head, with very marked benefit, I trust that a recurrence to the subject will not be unacceptable to the profession. I am aware that a prejudice exists against this practice, which by some is designated barbarous, by others heroic, and by some unnecessary; but I confess myself at a loss for a substitute in cases in which a powerful and speedy effect is desirable; and in this opinion I am glad to be supported by an authority of such weight as Dr. Prichard, who recommends, in certain states of the brain, issues, made by a longitudinal incision of the scalp over the sagittal suture, and says, "this remedy is not found in experience to be more painful than the more usual applications of setons, and it is incomparably more efficacious." I have employed it advantageously in epilepsy, obstinate headache of

long standing, in threatened paralysis, and in cases where there has been reason to suspect that effusion has taken place, but in none in which the benefit was more clearly and decisively marked than in the following:—

CASE I.

A strong man, aged 50, had been suffering for several months from giddiness and pain in the head, accompanied with dimness of sight and sickness. His gait was unsteady, and he had frequently fallen to the ground. He had been bled both generally and locally repeatedly, blisters and purgatives had been freely used, with other medicines, and that attention to diet which the rules of a hospital enjoin. Very partial relief had been obtained, and all the symptoms soon returned with increased violence. Wishing to ascertain the state of the blood, twenty ounces were drawn from the arm, which exhibited a buffy and inflamed coat; he was cupped, and took large doses of antimonial powder, with nitrate of potash, and salines, with so little relief that it was evident that no positive good could be expected from a continuance of such treatment. An issue was made over the sagittal suture to the extent of six inches, and a copious discharge promoted daily by inserting peas, smeared with savine ointment. He soon began to show evident signs of improvement, all the former alarming symptoms gradually subsided, and he so perfectly recovered as to be able to follow his usual occupation without inconvenience.

CASE II.

A robust healthy gentleman, about thirty, received a violent blow on the forehead, which knocked him down and stunned him. It was followed by symptoms of concussion of the brain, from which he recovered under the usual treatment. He continued well for upwards of a year, when he was seized early one morning with a severe epileptic fit, and did not perfectly recover the stupor for some hours. He had taken unusually great exercise the day before, which was a very hot one, and had eaten heartily and irregularly. Leeches were applied to the temples, and active opening medicine administered with relief. He was low and nervous for some time, but the only remarkable symptom which remained was the extreme slowness of his pulse, which was generally under fifty-eight beats in a minute, and seldom exceeded that number. His diet and bowels were regulated, and he was enjoined to lead a perfectly quiet life, and avoid all excitement; and as a precautionary measure, counter-irritation on the scalp was recommended as a likely means of averting danger.

Unfortunately that course was not adopted, and although he gradually improved in health for some time, his state was far from being satisfactory. Presently the former attacks returned, accompanied with sickness, and other symptoms, which excited the greatest alarm in the minds of his family. He was now taken to London, a course which was advised soon after the commencement of his illness, as it was thought possible that a minute examination of the head might lead to the detection of some mischief occasioned by the blow which had produced the attack and consequent symptoms. A consultation with a distinguished physician and two surgeons

of great eminence and experience was held. It was suspected that a thickening of the bone could be discovered, and that a corresponding enlargement of the internal table of the skull had taken place, which by its pressure had occasioned irritation of the brain and all the symptoms which followed. Although his medical advisers were not unanimous in this opinion, they all concurred that the treatment from which benefit was to be expected, was active counter-irritation and strict attention to the general health. The head was shaved, and iodine, with mercurial ointment, fully and fairly employed by friction on the scalp with the happiest effect, and he has now passed so long a period without experiencing any return of his malady as to justify the belief of his perfect recovery.

Ashley Lodge, Torquay, Feb. 4, 1846.

ON THE USE OF NITRATE OF SILVER IN CYNANCHE TONSILLARIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

The marked benefit which has appeared to result from a very simple mode of treatment, which for some time past I have been in the habit of using in cases of cynanche tonsillaris, induces me to offer the following observations:—

By far the greater number of cases of this disease have a favourable termination, either by resolution under antiphlogistic treatment, or by suppuration; still, though we have seldom any fatal consequences to apprehend, there do arise symptoms of a painful and distressing character, over which it is satisfactory to feel that some control has been secured, or that means available for prompt relief are in our possession. The suspension of deglutition, a serious evil in itself if long protracted in ill-disposed constitutions, and greater or less obstruction to respiration, sometimes even to a degree threatening suffocation, are amongst the prominent features. The usual mode of relief suggested in extreme cases is, evacuation of the matter by puncture of the tonsil, or, if circumstances are desperate, tracheotomy—of the necessity for which latter, however, the experience of Dr. Cullen we are told, furnished not an instance. With reference to the former proceeding, viz., puncture of the tonsil, I am disposed to believe that precisely in the same ratio as necessity for its employment seems to arise, do serious and often insurmountable obstacles to its performance present, from the very great difficulty or impossibility of separating the teeth and depressing the tongue to an extent which shall afford a sight of the point to be punctured; indeed in cases admitting of such depression as will yield the requisite view of the fauces, the absolute necessity of such interference might, I think, be questioned.

A much earlier evacuation of the matter, subsidence of the symptoms, and termination of the case, might, I am persuaded, often be secured, even before the mischief has yet interfered with deglutition or respiration to any great extent, by the application of the solid nitrate of silver to the tonsils, at a stage when a full view of the fauces is quite practicable,—that is to say as soon as possible after it becomes manifest that

suppuration and not resolution will be the result. The plan I have pursued has been to make either one deep eschar, about half an inch in length, in a vertical or horizontal direction, according to the figure of the tumour, or several small eschars, about the size of a pea, over the surface of the tonsil, and in cases presenting several small greyish spots, which held out a delusive hope that matter is all but ready to burst forth from them, to make the eschars on the bands of sound tissue intervening between these spots, which I take to be frequently, only so many points of a slough shewing through the mucous membrane, and awaiting a free opening to be thrown off. If, even after the application, the distressing symptoms referred to should ensue, we can certainly with greater confidence predict speedy relief, knowing that destruction of substance is proceeding both from within and without the cavity of the abscess. The limited destruction of the mucous membrane alone might hasten a favourable termination by some hours, for this membrane will often be seen solely confining the matter, as in a bag, long after the other structure has yielded. A further and very important advantage resulting from this free exposure of the ulcerated cavity, is the opportunity afforded for effecting such further destruction of substance by reapplications of the caustic as shall regulate the future size of the tonsils, now so commonly found in an inconvenient state of hypertrophy, and establishing such a firm and complete cicatrization as shall afford a probable security against recurrences of the disease so common amongst those who have once suffered from it.

These remarks, having little of novelty or rarity to recommend them, I might have felt some reluctance to obtrude upon your notice, but for a persuasion that, to cases of almost every day occurrence, are the observations of the general practitioner most advantageously directed.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHAS. EDW. BERNARD.

Weston-super-Mare, Feb. 4, 1846.

PROVINCIAL Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1846.

The quarterly returns of the state of the public health, published by the Registrar-General, show an extraordinary diminution in the average amount of the mortality for the last quarter. From these returns it appears that the mortality has been below the calculated number in the December quarter during the last five years; but in the corresponding quarter of last year, (1845,) this difference is nearly double that in any previous year. The actual mortality for this quarter amounted to 39,178, the calculated mortality to 45,647, so that the number of deaths was less by 6,469, or nearly one-seventh than the estimate.

This favourable condition is attributed in part to