

31 December 1831

CANCER OF THE BREAST, IN A MAN—
EXTIRPATION—CURE.

CANCER of the breast, though common in the female, rarely attacks men; we therefore give the following case:—

Charles Barthelemy Gillet, a labourer, aged 52, in planting some vinestakes about eight years since, received a blow on the left breast. This was followed by vivid pain in the part contused, succeeded by the appearance of a small hard lump, which during the two consecutive years had scarcely attained the size of a pea. Since that time it has made insensible advances, and, upon his admission to the *Hôtel Dieu*, (under M. Sanson), was of the volume of a pullet's egg. The tumour is hard, tuberculated, unequal, the seat of lancinating pains; the skin adherent to it is thinned, and about to ulcerate at many points. There are two axillary ganglia affected, of small size, in which no shooting pain has yet exhibited itself. General health good. The operation was performed on the 14th November. The tumour was circumscribed by two semi-elliptical incisions, after which it was exposed by a careful dissection. The incision was extended along the lymphatic vessels, and the glands of the axilla were drawn forward by means of a cord which they formed, being a bond of union between them and the enlarged structure. Two small glands, as big as a large pea, were then removed.

The edges of the wounds being brought correctly together, the usual dressings were applied.

No untoward symptom has appeared as the effect of the operation, and the patient being now completely cured is about to leave the hospital. He would doubtless have left already, had there not come on, without any obvious cause, a phlegmonous abscess in the right arm, just over the debut of the humeral artery. This abscess has been opened and is nearly cicatrised. —*Lancette Française*.

EXPERIMENTS ON THE BLOOD IN CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having been enabled to complete the experimental inquiries on which I have some time back been engaged in Newcastle upon-Tyne, I beg you will have the kindness to give insertion to the annexed outlines of the results I have obtained:—

1. The blood drawn in the worst cases of the cholera, is unchanged in its anatomical or globular structure.

2. It has lost a large proportion of its water, 1000 parts of cholera serum having but the average of 860 parts of water.

3. It has lost also a great proportion of its NEUTRAL saline ingredients.

4. Of the free alkali contained in healthy serum, not a particle is present in some cholera cases, and barely a trace in others.*

5. Urea exists in the cases where suppression of urine has been a marked symptom.

6. All the salts deficient in the blood, especially the carbonate of soda, are present in large quantities in the peculiar white dejected matters.*

There are other results of minor consequence, to which I will not at present allude, neither shall I on this occasion offer any observation on the practical inference to which my experiments may lead. In a few days a detailed report shall be published, in which the mode of analysis, &c. will be minutely described. It will be found, I regret to say, in every essential particular, to contradict that recently given by Hermann. All my experiments, however, have been publicly performed, and can be authenticated by numerous witnesses, a precaution I thought it necessary to adopt, lest it might be supposed that I impugned, without sufficient foundation, the accuracy of the Moscow professor.

May I add, that until the publication of my report, I shall deem the suspension of discussion on the results now introduced as a matter of personal courtesy and obligation.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. B. O'SHAUGHNESSY, M.D.

London, 29 December, 1831.

SIR HENRY HALFORD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You have proved yourself such an admirable limner in portraying the prominent features of the "heads" of our profession, and have from time to time so well followed up your sketches with physiological reflections, that I cannot forbear sending you the subjoined passage, cut out from the *Morning Chronicle* of Tuesday. You should insert it, as a *recherché vignette*, to fill up a niche in the well-known "Sketches of the Medical Profession." Here is the extract alluded to:—

"A ludicrous mistake happened to Sir HENRY HALFORD on the rejection of the Reform Bill. Sir Henry is, or was, Court physician, and a courtier, and anxious, as a courtier should be, to stand well with all

* The blood and dejected substances were obtained in one analysis, from the same patient, and the blood was drawn half an hour after the evacuation occurred.