

PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

Dr. Quain exhibited a specimen of
FIBROUS AND FATTY DEGENERATION OF THE
HEART,

with the following history:—

Lady H—, aged 58, on rising from bed, on the morning of Oct. 21st, went to the night-chair for the purpose of emptying her bladder, then laid herself down again, and died immediately.

The following are the principal facts in the clinical history of her case:—When about 30 years of age she went to India, where she remained fourteen years without any serious illness or inconvenience, and returned to this country some fifteen years ago. She enjoyed good health, save that she complained of bilious headache occasionally, until about seven years ago, when in her 51st year, the menstrual functions being still regularly performed, she had an apoplectic seizure one evening, after returning from a concert. This caused a confusion of intellect and a loss of speech, which lasted eight or nine days, but no general paralysis of sensation or motion. About eighteen months after she had a second, but less severe attack, followed by slight weakness of the right upper and lower extremities. Within a similar period she had a third attack; this more resembled the first. She was then in her 54th year, and the menstrual functions began to be irregularly performed. Each attack was treated on the usual antiphlogistic plan, including mercury, and it was remarked at the time that she bore bleeding badly. Soon after the first attack,—that is, about four years ago,—she began to complain of shortness of breathing on exertion. This, and the partial paralysis, interfered with her taking exercise, and she became stouter. She continued pretty well, however, until October, 1849, when she was one night seized with a most distressing attack of difficult breathing, which lasted about five hours, and was then relieved by ether and ammonia. She had no return of the distress, and did well, with the exception of an attack of common bronchitis in February last, until the commencement of September last, when, being at Tonbridge Wells, she had several attacks, at intervals of two or three nights, of the same difficulty of breathing. For three of these attacks she was rather freely bled. As she still continued very ill she came to town, and I saw her soon after, in consultation with Mr. J. C. Langmore. She was in bed, but suffering only from a sense of faintness or exhaustion, consequent on a distressing attack during the preceding night. These attacks generally came on about two o'clock in the morning, and were of a very alarming character. The extremities and face became cold and livid, the pulse extremely feeble and irregular, and the sense of impending suffocation most urgent. A severe pain in the region of the heart and across the chest came on as the sense of suffocation became less. The pulse was 68 and compressible,—it was generally about 60; she was free from giddiness, or noise in the ears; she slept well except when disturbed by the attacks, and was not subject to faintness; she complained of slight pain in the region of the liver; the motions were pale and lumpy. Mr. Langmore described the urine as being healthy. The heart's impulse was weak, but the dulness in this region was more extended than natural; the first sound was remarkably low and prolonged, the second clear, and heard over a considerable extent of the upper part of the chest. There was no murmur. Some slight sonorous ronchus was heard in the back. Considering the age, conformation, and sedentary habits of this lady, and also the character of the symptoms, for which in the physical signs no other explanation could be found, the conviction formed was, that the disease was fatty degeneration of the heart to a moderate extent; an opinion strengthened by the presence of an arcus senilis. The result justified the opinion; she died in about five weeks after my seeing her. The treatment consisted of mild mercurials, with taraxacum and aperients, alkalis with bitter tonics, and a few leeches to the region of the heart, to be followed by iron and antispasmodics, during the paroxysms, which produced very beneficial effects. The fits became much less frequent and severe for some time before her death.

Post-mortem.—The body and viscera generally were covered with much fat. The calvarium was firmly adherent and deeply marked inside by vessels. There was more serum than usual

in the cavity of the arachnoid and ventricles. On slicing the brain the remains of the causes of the three apoplectic seizures were found; one a small spot, the size of a pea, situated in the fore part of the left hemisphere, towards the base, was composed of a transparent greyish substance, like cellular tissue, infiltrated with serum. In each corpus striatum, towards its upper part, was found an orange-coloured spot, about the size of a haricot bean, soft, and in the left having somewhat of a cystic appearance; the white fibres were here broken up and distorted; the arteries of the base were studded with atheromatous or fatty matter; the lungs healthy; the heart presented rather more fat than usual on the surface, and might weigh about 14 oz. The anterior branch of the left coronary artery was extremely ossified; the right auricle was dilated, thickened, and filled with dark blood; the right ventricle not dilated, but its walls thickened; the tissues of the walls of these cavities appeared healthy; the left auricle and ventricle were contracted and nearly empty; the wall of the left ventricle, at the thickest part, measured thirteen lines; the valves were healthy; the muscular substance of the septum towards the apex, and the wall of the left ventricle towards the anterior surface of the heart, presented the pale buff-colour of fatty degeneration, which passed into and contrasted with the healthy flesh-colour of other parts of the heart,—a species of ecchymosis, scarcely amounting to hæmorrhage, appeared in the diseased part of the wall of the left ventricle. Under the microscope the usual characters of fatty degeneration were found, but there existed also a large quantity of a fibrous texture, mixed with the fatty degeneration. The liver was enlarged, lobulated, hard, and moderately granular. Both kidneys rough and granular; one larger than usual, the other smaller. Dr. Quain referred to the importance and the possibility of recognising this disease during life, even when not very considerable in extent. The treatment which seemed to a certain extent to have controlled the disease in this case was referred to, and allusion made to the relation which existed between the ossification of the coronary artery and the portion of the heart affected, showing clearly that the degeneration was due to impaired nutrition.

MEDICAL NEWS.

MILITARY APPOINTMENTS.—3rd Dragoon Guards: Joseph Sawyers, M.D., to be assistant-surgeon, vice Richard Carmichael Bourne, who resigns. Provisional Battalion: Staff-Surgeon of the 2nd class Andrew Maclean, M.D., to be surgeon, vice John Freeborn Pink, deceased. Hospital Staff: Staff Assistant-Surgeon James M'Grigor Grant, to be staff-surgeon of the 2nd class, vice Maclean, appointed to the Provisional Battalion; Acting Assistant-Surgeon Wm. Briscoe, M.D., to be staff assistant-surgeon, vice Grant, promoted.

NAVAL APPOINTMENTS.—Surgeon Joseph Caldwell (1842), recently paid off from the *Mariner*, 12 sloop, on her return from the East India station, is appointed surgeon-superintendent of the *Lady Kennaway*, hired convict-ship.

OBITUARY.—At St. Omer's, on the 26th ult., Maitland Maitland, M.D., in the 91st year of his age. On the 12th November, at Foulsham, Norfolk, James Saunders, Esq., surgeon, aged 67. At Trinidad, Sept. 26th, on board the barque *Atlantic*, James Guthrie, M.D., assistant colonial surgeon, and formerly assistant-physician to the Royal Edinburgh Asylum, aged 34.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The first meeting of this Society took place on Monday last, in the rooms of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, lent for the occasion. The "whip" had been most extensively used; and, as might have been anticipated, a large but very motley group—such as the hall of the Medical and Chirurgical Society never before beheld, and, it is to be hoped, never will again—assembled to inaugurate the new Society. Gentlemen who advertise, we are advised, were there in some force; a member of a "Silent Friend" firm showed himself; and a practitioner with the following card or rather handbill, which we publish (though without the advantage of typographical display) as a curiosity, leaving out the name, lest we be charged advertisement duty, honoured the meeting:—

"Dr. ***** District Medical Officer ***** 17, Little **** street. At home until 10 in the forenoon, and 4 to 5 in the afternoon. Orders for visits ought, in general, be obtained early in the morning."

The accomplished President seemed anything but at home; and of the forty-four office-bearers, only seventeen gave him the support of their presence. Nevertheless, he delivered a most eloquent and able address, as all must be that proceeds from the pen of Dr. Babington. Dr. Bryson read the first portion of an excellent paper on the Infectious Nature of Cholera; and this we trust to publish at length in our pages. We wish the Society every success,—and a little more discretion.

THE COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP.—The examinations for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons commenced on Tuesday, and was continued until Thursday last. The following questions on anatomy and physiology were submitted to the candidates on the 3rd inst., viz. :—

1. What glands pour their secretions into the mouth? Describe the situation and connexions of the parotid.
 2. Describe the elbow-joint, and the mechanism by which rotation and supination of the hand is performed.
 3. Describe the position, course, and connexion of the intestine rectum in the male, and mention the peculiarities of its structure.
 4. Describe the course of the common iliac artery, its relative position to the parts around on the right and left side, the point of its bifurcation, the course and relative position of the external iliac.
 5. Describe the distribution of the arteries supplying the abdominal portion of the organs of digestion.
 6. Enumerate the parts occupying the upper opening of the thorax, and describe their relative situation.
- The following questions in pathology and surgery were submitted to the candidates on the 5th inst., viz. :—

1. Describe the healing process, by adhesion, by granulation.
2. Describe the most frequent causes of suspended animation, their modes of action, and how death is to be averted.
3. Describe the evidences of the presence of a foreign body in the air-passages, the operation for its removal, and the difficulties and dangers which may attend it.
4. Describe the morbid changes which attend the formation and progress of a popliteal aneurism, the operation for its cure by ligatures and by compression of the femoral artery; how do these two modes of treatment act in the cure of the disease, and what are their respective merits?
5. Describe the effects of rickets on the bones generally and specially; give the treatment of the disease.
6. Enumerate the diseases of the eye in which the morbid action originates in the conjunctiva.

THE COFFIN DRUGS.—An inquest has been recently held at Haggerstone, before Mr. Baker, the Coroner, on the body of Mr. Bedwell. The jury found a verdict, "That the deceased died a natural death, but that his death may have been accelerated by certain herbs improperly administered to him, and which, in the opinion of many medical gentlemen were opposed to the cure of the disease under which he was labouring; and they condemn the reckless and inconsiderate use of such materials, without a regular and proper attendance on the deceased." The Coroner said, "that the jury had taken a very merciful view of the case, which he would bear in mind, and in case any death in future occurred under similar circumstances, where it could be shown clearly to arise from an improper administration of a medicine, he should advise a verdict of manslaughter." The newspapers in different parts of the country have already recorded so many instances of death following the use of the deleterious drug recommended by Coffin, and exhibited most rashly and ignorantly by uneducated impostors, that it is quite time that Government should interfere. Quacks destroy more lives than actual warfare. Printers, journeymen shoemakers, bricklayers, labourers, &c., who purchase Coffin's quackeries and his pamphlet, fancy they have found a royal road to medicine, and practise accordingly.

HEALTH OF LONDON DURING THE WEEK.

THE sudden increase in the deaths last week has been followed by a more remarkable decrease. The following numbers show the fluctuations in the returns during the four weeks of November:—921, 908, 1016, and in the week ending last Saturday, 861. The average of the ten weeks corresponding to last, in the years 1840-49, was 1067, which if corrected for increase of population, is 1164; the 861 deaths registered last week are therefore less than the corrected average by 303. It will be seen from a statement of the deaths in three periods of life, that the young, the middle-

aged, and persons of advanced years, now participate in an improved state of health:—

	Last Week.	Average of Ten Corresponding Weeks (1840-49.)
From birth to 15 years	410	508
15 years to 60	289	344
60 and upwards	162	218

But notwithstanding the great decrease in the present return as compared with that of the previous week, it appears that in the class of zymotic or epidemic diseases the number remains nearly the same. The aggregate of fatal cases by epidemics was in the preceding week 203, in the last 196; whereas in affections of the respiratory organs, the number, which rose to 201, has now fallen to 160. Consumption, which stands in the tubercular class, was 111, and in the following week declined to 96. Convulsions, which carried off in the previous week 44 children, was recorded last week as the cause of death to 35; and while 48 persons died of "age," only 24 cases this week are placed under this head. Between the 21st and 28th of November 8 pensioners died in the Royal Hospital at Greenwich, in most cases of paralysis or apoplexy. Last week the deaths from small-pox amounted to 14, all amongst children; and, though it is still below the average, the disease appears to be making progress in the metropolis.

MORTALITY TABLE.

Deaths in the week ending Saturday, Nov. 30, 1850. (Metropolis.)

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Nov. 23.				Sum of Ten Weeks.
	0	15	60	All Ages.	
ALL CAUSES	410	289	162	861	10665
Specified Causes	410	288	162	860	10613
Zymotic (or Epidemic, Endemic, and Contagious) Diseases	153	22	14	196	2309
SPORADIC DISEASES:					
Dropsy, Cancer, and other Diseases of uncertain or variable seat	1	22	13	41	540
Tubercular Diseases	49	84	4	137	1751
Diseases of the Brain, Spinal Marrow, Nerves, and Senses	46	40	39	116	1344
Diseases of the Heart and Blood-vessels	3	17	16	35	315
Diseases of the Lungs, and of the other Organs of Respiration	78	38	44	160	2345
Diseases of the Stomach, Liver, and other Organs of Digestion	34	21	4	49	642
Diseases of the Kidneys, &c.	2	4	1	7	97
Childbirth, Diseases of the Uterus, &c.	—	9	3	12	110
Rheumatism, Diseases of the Bones, Joints, &c.	5	6	1	12	79
Diseases of the Skin, Cellular Tissue, &c.	—	—	—	—	10
Malformations	—	—	—	—	42
Premature Birth and Debility	25	2	—	27	179
Atrophy	14	—	—	14	154
Age	—	—	24	24	613
Sudden	2	1	—	3	140
Violence, Privation, Cold, and Intemperance	6	15	3	24	262
Causes not Specified	—	1	—	1	53

The Deaths in the several Districts are as follow:—

DISTRICTS.	Population in 1841.	Nov. 30, 1850.	Sum of Ten Weeks.
London	1945369	861	10665
West	301189	137	1485
North	376588	179	1930
Central	374199	135	1947
East	393067	189	2322
South	503346	218	2775

The following is the number of Deaths occurring from some of the more important special causes:—

Apoplexy	31	Heart	21	Phthisis	96
Erysipelas	64	Hooping-cough	23	Pneumonia	67
Cholera	0	Hydrocephalus	19	Scarlatina	32
Childbirth	7	Influenza	2	Small-pox	14
Convulsions	35	Liver	12	Stomach	3
Diarrhoea	13	Lungs	3	Toothing	11
Dropsy	12	Measles	25	Typhus	47
Erysipelas	4	Paralysis	22	Uterus	3

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

	Births.	Deaths.	Births over Deaths.
Males	773	453	320
Females	709	408	301
Total	1482	861	621