

TWO CASES OF SURGICAL INSANITY FOLLOWING SIMPLE FRACTURE.*

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There are numerous cases reported of mania following injuries to the head, also following surgical operations; but there are very few reported cases of insanity following simple fracture.

Dr. Shepherd, Montreal, reported two cases of intracapsular fracture of the femur, followed by insanity, twenty years ago; both recovered.

Dr. Howard Kelly reports 20 cases of mania following minor plastic operations with one death. A few of these cases were slightly toxic, but most of them were free of any septic condition, the insanity being due to disturbance of the mental equilibrium brought about by the strain of the operation, superadded to mental excitement antedating the operation.

Dr. Keene says these cases are traumatic neurasthenia and traumatic hysteria only, not insanity.

Dr. Howard, Baltimore, thinks there is little ground for the use of the term insanity in these cases, were it not for the existence of infective processes accompanied by delirium or prolonged depression.

Case 1.—Mrs. F., aged 50, a healthy woman of a nervous disposition, in October, 1896, fell from her bicycle, fracturing her Tibia. The bone was set without anesthesia, and her recovery was without incident.

Four years later, Sept. 2, 1899, Mrs. F. again fell from her bicycle and fractured the Femur at the junction of the upper and middle third. She was treated at home on a fracture bed with Liston's long splint and extension in the usual way.

A general anæsthetic was given to diagnose the fracture and apply the splint. For a few days there was no more anxiety on the part of the patient than when her leg was broken four years before. At the end of the first week, however, marked hysterical symptoms were noticed, and from day to day grew worse.

When questioned she did not complain of pain, but said she would never get well, that her second accident would certainly kill her. By Sept. 12th, the hysterical symptoms were so violent, a second nurse was engaged, and in a few days more she developed a confusional insanity. On Sept. 24th she refused to swallow food or drink, and was moved to St. Michael's Hospital where she received rectal feeding till her death on Oct. 7th, 1899.

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