

was always persistent at one spot, and which suddenly ceased, the patient exclaiming that he was quite well, but death supervened a few hours afterwards, and the post-mortem showed the cause to be perforation of the intestine caused by a bristle of a tooth brush, and which bristle was found sticking in the intestine.

#### A NEEDLE IN THE HEART.

"At a *post mortem* examination in a lunatic asylum in Saxony a needle was found sticking in the heart. It had passed through the posterior wall of the left ventricle. The patient, a man aged 25, had died of peritonitis; he had always felt well previous to his last illness, and never complained of any cardiac troubles. In what way the needle entered his heart remains unknown."

The above quoted from the *British Medical Journal* of 30th August, 1879, emboldens me to report the following case which occurred to me in my practice at South Kensington a few years ago, and the notes of which I came across a few days since. I should have reported it then, but, from its extraordinary nature and press of private practice as well, I did not do so. A. B., a young man of two or three and twenty, with an anxious, care-worn expression, a member of one of my clubs, consulted me for pains in the chest, and at times extreme difficulty of breathing. All remedies failed to give him relief; he consulted other medical men, and was an out-patient at several hospitals without any beneficial result, and the only temporary alleviation of his sufferings that he ever obtained was by getting his friends to strike him violently with the clenched fist repeatedly between the shoulder blades, and he eventually died in great agony, his dying request being that I should open him. I did, and, to my great surprise, found a small stalk of the tobacco plant entangled in the chordæ tendinæ of the tricuspid valve!! A friend of mine, a chemist (unfortunately since dead), and the man's father and brother were present at the post-mortem, but all my entreaties to be allowed to retain possession of the heart were of no avail, although I offered to pay his funeral expenses on that condition. They were Irish, and, had it not been an express promise on his death-bed, I should not have been allowed to make the post-mortem. As to how the twig of tobacco got there, beyond

the fact of his having been employed in a tobacco manufactory, I cannot attempt to offer any explanation, but truly "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy, Horatio."

4 Cambridge Terrace,

Westbourne Park.

9th September, 1879.

#### BUSINESS.

A gentleman recently about to pay his doctor's bill said, "Well doctor, as my little boy gave the measles to all my neighbors' children, and as they were attended by you, I think you can afford, at the very least, to deduct ten per cent. from the amount of my bill for the increase of business we gave you."

## Progress of Medical Science.

### DEFIBRINATED BLOOD FOR RECTAL ALIMENTATION.

At a late meeting of the Therapeutical Society of New York, Dr. Andrew H. Smith, Chairman of the Committee on Restoratives, presented a report (*New York Medical Journal*, April, 1879) on this subject. From the facts before them the committee felt warranted in drawing the following conclusions:—

1. That defibrinated blood is admirably adapted for use for rectal alimentation.
2. That in doses of two to six ounces it is usually retained without any inconvenience, and is frequently so completely absorbed that very little trace of it can be discovered in the dejections.
3. That administered in this way once or twice a day, it produces in about one-third of the cases for the first few days more or less constipation of the bowels.
4. That in a small proportion of cases the constipation persists, and even becomes more decided the longer the enemata are continued.
5. That in a small percentage of cases irritability of the bowels attends its protracted use.
6. That it is a valuable aid to the stomach whenever the latter is inadequate to a complete nutrition of the system.
7. That its use is indicated in all cases not involving the large intestine, and requiring a tonic influence which cannot readily be obtained by remedies employed in the usual way.
8. That in favorable cases it is capable of giving an impulse to nutrition which is rarely if ever obtained from the employment of other remedies.
9. That its use is wholly unattended by danger.—*Am. Jour. Med. Sci.*