

THE
BRITISH AMERICAN JOURNAL
OF
MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, MAY, 1845.

[No. 2.

CASE OF TEMPORARY PARTIAL STAGNATION OF THE CAPILLARY CIRCULATION.

To the Editor of the British American Journal.

SIR,—The following rare case may be deemed worthy a place in the pages of your journal, among the "curiosities of medical experience":—

I was called a few years ago to attend a gentleman of the city, who had been suffering for some time previously from extensively ulcerated sore throat, and severe pains, the consequence of ill-managed secondary syphilis. His constitution was broken down, between disease and the injudicious and irregular use of mercury, and his spirits much depressed from his long illness.

prescribed for him restoratives, as sarsaparilla and wine, and treated the ulceration of the throat by local applications; under which plan he soon began to improve. In the beginning of October, (about a month after my attendance commenced,) he became affected with occasional painful tingling sensations in his feet, those which accompany the return of the natural temperature to a part, after being very cold; the parts affected became of a dark blue or purple color, accompanied with stiffness and swelling; after a short space of time the sensation subsided, and the color disappeared, to return next day, on his getting out of bed; generally these attacks only came on once a day, but occasionally they were more frequent. The hands became similarly affected, and in a short time the tip of the nose, prominence of the cheeks and ears, were in the same manner affected; detached patches, resembling eczema, and tumefactions like erythema nodosum, appeared on different parts of the thighs and arms; these also occasionally assumed the blue color for a short time, like the other parts, and experienced the disagreeable tingling sensation, but again resumed their color, as it disappeared. Gentle friction was very efficacious in shortening the attacks, and cold had evidently great influence in inducing them. Although the general circulation was languid, there was no irregularity in the heart's action; the affection evidently ended on a partial stagnation of the blood in the capillaries. Although the exciting cause was not so

manifest, under the plan pursued, the ulceration in the throat healed, and his general health became restored; and in about three months he was convalescent, and apparently free from his "morbus caruleus." At this time he drove out for a short distance from town, on a pleasant mild day, when before his return his face had become completely blue, and even darker than that of the worst cholera, to the great surprise of those who saw him. An old experienced Physician visited him out of curiosity, and admitted that he had never seen such a case before. Stagnation of the blood in the capillaries, and even gangrene, occasionally follows bad fevers, and other debilitating diseases, or it may be consequent on old age, or the peculiar morbid operation of ergot; but cases of partial and temporary stagnation like the present, I am inclined to think are very rare.

Dr. Graves notices a consequence somewhat similar to the above, which followed a fever, of a very severe type, in Dublin, in which the nose, toes, and fingers became blue and painful, but unaccompanied by tingling or swelling; there was desquamation of the part, and a surrounding red margin or line of demarcation. These cases all terminated fatally. He also mentions a case of blueness of the fingers, arising from long and frequent exposure of the hands in cold water. Although the pathological state of the capillaries may be somewhat similar, (if not identical) in these cases, it is not so easy to explain how the stagnation in this case was induced in detached patches, at no great distance from the centre of the circulation, while the exciting cause at the same time was not so manifest. Dr. Graves admits the difficulty of explanation of the rationale, and I willingly follow his example.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JAS. CRAWFORD, M. D.

St. James's Place, 6th May, 1845.

DEPRESSED FRACTURE OF THE CRANIUM.—DEATH FROM CEREBRITIS TERMINATING IN ABSCESS THIRTY-SIX DAYS AFTER THE RECEPTION OF THE INJURY.

The remarkable feature in the following case, which a few years ago formed the subject of a legal investigation, is the length of time which intervened between