

ART. XXXVIII.—*Cases of Operations for Cataract, chiefly at the Toronto General Hospital.* By W. R. BEAUMONT, F. R. C. S., Eng.

THE following cases will be divided into those which were favorable for operation and those which were unfavorable, i. e. into cases not complicated with any manifest alteration of structure (save of the lens or capsule) or probable or evident impairment of the nervous apparatus of vision, and into those cases which were more or less so complicated.

An operation for cataract is often spoken of as unsuccessful in cases, in which, if the immediate object of the operation be borne in mind, it would more properly be termed successful. I mean that an opaque lens or capsule if removed by operation from the eye, or so altered in position, as no longer to intercept, in any way, the passage of a sufficient quantity of light to the fundus of the eye, and that without any permanent injury to the structures involved in the operation, that then, although the patient may regain little or no vision in consequence of the operation, still it ought to be considered as successful, in as much as the operation will have effected all that any operation for cataract ever effected; the power of seeing well, or impairment, or privation of sight, depending after such result of an operation on the more or less perfect or imperfect condition of the nervous apparatus of vision, and which condition we cannot, a priori, so positively determine, as to refuse a patient the chance of regaining some vision, however much we may be inclined to believe that the loss of transparency of the lens or capsule, may be the least evil affecting the eye under consideration. I have made these observations, because many, if not a majority, of the eyes I have operated on, would fairly come under the class of unfavorable for operation, i. e., the cataracts had more or less unfavorable complications.

*Case 1.—Prognosis as to result of operation rather unfavorable—Extraction of Lens after a previous operation by needle.*

Joshua Strother, æt. 45, an African black, was admitted under my care into the Toronto General Hospital, July 26th, 1844.—The pupil of the left eye, (that operated on) presented a uniform bluish white opacity, and the same when the pupil was greatly dilated by Belladonna, so that the cataract was evidently large and soft. He could with this eye distinguish light from darkness, but nothing more. In the right eye cataract was forming, and its vision more impaired than one would expect from such a slight degree of opacity alone.

A small mark was visible in the left sclerotica where it had been pierced by the needle a month before his admission, by which operation no benefit had been derived. His general health was not good, he was feeble, and his mind at times somewhat deranged.