

standing, was also discovered. On removing the calvarium, pus in small quantity escaped from between the bone and dura mater, the pus seemed to be situated over the right orbital plate; internal portion of frontal bone slightly diseased, dura mater not thickened. On removing dura mater, a discolored spot, the size of half a crown, was seen through the arachnoid (which was healthy and transparent) on the top of the right hemisphere; a similar spot at the base of same hemisphere. On dividing the arachnoid and parts superiorly, an abscess containing several ounces of straw colored pus was found, this abscess occupied the centre of the whole of the middle lobe, communicated with the lateral ventricle of same side, and through it, with another large abscess at the base. A third abscess containing about three ounces of pus, was found in the left hemisphere. Beyond this pus, which seemed to be contained in well defined sacs, the substance of the brain appeared perfectly healthy and of natural colour and consistency. Cerebellum, normal, medula spinalis, do. No purulent matter was found in any other part of the body, although the different textures, including the large joints, veins, &c., were carefully examined.

The evidence given at the inquest went to prove, that the deceased was in tolerable health, but rather pale and weak, previous to the receipt of the injuries mentioned. That he did not bleed, neither was he stunned, when he was struck with the fist on the head. When struck with the coal he was in the hold about fifteen feet from the mate, who was on deck; the piece of coal was about the size of a hen's egg, and thrown with considerable force.

The reader of the above case will no doubt perceive, independently of its many interesting pathological features, its important bearings in a medico-legal point of view, and the difficulty necessarily experienced by the medical witness in arriving at a just conclusion respecting the immediate cause of death. The following highly interesting questions naturally suggest themselves:—Whether in this case the fatal result ought to be attributed to the disease in the chest or to that in the brain, or to the influence of both? Whether the two diseases are separate and distinct, or stand in reference to each other in the relation of cause and effect? To which of the two diseases give precedency?

I have no doubt from post mortem appearances, that the disease in the chest was caused by the blow on the side, but whether this disease was not modified and made more severe in character by previously existing disease in the brain, is I think, questionable.

I am inclined to believe that the disease in the brain existed at a date anterior to that of the receipt of the injury of the side, in this opinion I am supported by the old injury found on the skull, and the disease on