

As the pages will show, cases have been narrated where the method had failed, not only in preserving limb, but life also, because it had not been timely enough called into requisition.

"I do not know that the same practice (incision of the dermis and fasciæ, for the relief of *tension*, and for the purpose of *evacuating bloody and serous extravasata*—speedily to become septic) in crushed limbs, had ever been promulgated before, and would be thankful to the reviewer to be informed where I could get this information (of 'older surgeons having acted also upon the same theories'). That injured limbs in such conditions, have been incised by other physicians, I will not question; yet I claim that *openness of wound and its enlargement immediately or soon after the injury, in the longitudinal axis of the member, for the purpose of relieving the tension of fascia and cutis—due to pent-up blood—which threatened gangrene, erysipelas, phlegmon, and pyæmia, have not, as far as I know, been before insisted on.* This is the practice which I may be allowed to consider original, as well as that of incising bruised limbs without breach of surface, for the above-mentioned indications.

"Next, the reviewer appears to have misunderstood the tenor of my remarks in regard to gunshot wounds. I suggested similar incisions (in the *long axis of the limb*) in these cases, but did not mean that the *track of the wound made by the bullet, should be slit open*, as had been done by other surgeons. If all success had followed this procedure, involving the section of fasciæ and muscles in every direction, the *longitudinal incisions* will be found not only harmless, but serving an important indication—that of relieving tense tissues, and giving free exit to primary and subsequent extravasation. They were not proposed with the view of facilitating the extraction of the bullet or other foreign material, but mainly for the purpose of obviating the direful effects which tension of the fasciæ and confined blood and serum are inducing."

Every practitioner should obtain and read this work carefully, as the conservative measures which are advocated require still further elucidation and confirmation, which can only be done by practitioners giving the result of their practice in this really great advancement in surgical science.

ON SOME OF THE CAUSES OF INSANITY IN CALIFORNIA.

By HENRY GIBBON, M. D.

In a former paper I referred to the powerful effect of attention, directed to a part of the body which is suspected of being the seat of disease, in disturbing healthy innervation and creating disease in the suspected part; or creating morbid impressions at least, of hypochondriac character. Patients thus affected cannot be reasoned out of their illusions. They must be *humored*, so to speak—like real madmen. Their fancied ailments must be acknowledged and prescribed for. And yet the treatment must be such as to divert the patient's attention as much as possible from the part affected. It is not always easy to accomplish both these purposes at once.

Such cases are often a severe tax on the patience and ingenuity of the practitioner. The patient must be inspired with implicit confidence in his medical adviser. Without such confidence, treatment will be likely to prove nugatory. With it, a mere *placebo* will often suffice. In other cases, the most nauseous doses and the most painful applications are required.

My readers have heard the story of the hypochondriac lady who believed she had swallowed a snake, and whose physician, unable to reason her out of the delusion, admitted it as a fact, and treated her accordingly. Having procured a snake for the purpose, he administered an emetic, and during its active operation managed to introduce the reptile into the basin which received the contents from her stomach. It was a triumph for both patient and doctor. The patient was cured, and the doctor bore away the serpent for preservation in his cabinet. But alas! he had scarcely reached his home when he was recalled. Having some renewal of her former feelings, the idea flashed on the mind of the poor woman that the serpent had left a family of young vipers within her, and she was likely to be as ill as ever. Upon this the doctor submitted the animal to the inspection of an eminent naturalist, who pronounced it a male; and with that assurance the patient was permanently relieved.

The cure of persons thus rocked on the outer eddies of the whirlpool of insanity is very uncertain. The cause remaining, whatever that may be, the effect is liable to return in some other form. A few years ago I was consulted at my office by a man of some intelligence, whose neck and face were covered with boils. This resulted from a disease with which he had been inoculated by wearing the shirt of a person infected with syphilis. His wife, with whom he had had trouble, and from whom he was now separated, had given him the shirt with evil purpose, after it had been washed and laid away in his drawer. Such was his story. There was no objection in this case to a flat contradiction of the silly notion, as the sores would heal in due time, whatever his folly. When they had so far healed as to be no more a source of discomfort, he came in one day greatly excited by the discovery of some blotches on the skin, not visible to other eyes than his own. Next, his tongue was diseased, and then something was wrong with his nose and eyes. Finally he called much distressed to show me his ears, which stood out from his head in an unnatural position. For six months the poor fellow was a prey to such tortures. But, though the original hallucination continued, it ceased at length to develop any external manifestations. He is now in the enjoyment of good health. But the Shirt of Nessus is always present in his imagination, and he watches constantly for some poisonous effects.

One of my earliest lessons on the pernicious influence which the mind is capable of exerting on the body, may be worthy of mention in this place. Many years ago, a man whose habits were generally correct, consulted me on account of a gleet, the sequel of gonorrhœa. It was the only time in his life he had transgressed in this direction, and he had paid dearly in mental suffering. Further, he had a marriage engagement awaiting his cure; but he shrunk with horror from the idea of marrying whilst there was a shadow of possibility that he might pro-