

2 SHEPHERD, MANIA FOLLOWING OPERATIONS.

Two of the cases followed extirpation of the uterus, two castration, and two washing out of the bladder. Ahlfeld reports a case of marked mental disturbance following the introduction of a speculum.¹ In a paper read before the Dublin meeting of the British Medical Association, August, 1887, by Dr. George Savage,² of London, a number of cases of insanity are reported following the use of anæsthetics in operations. In some of the cases cited, the insanity is clearly due to the anæsthetic, but in others the connection is not so clear, and traumatism as a cause cannot be altogether excluded. Dr. Savage asks, "How long after an operation may the effect of an anæsthetic be felt?" In certain cases, in which days have elapsed before symptoms develop, it is hard to connect the conditions; but in many of these cases careful examination will reveal that there was depression, drowsiness, or irritability from the first, so that although the maniacal attack had been postponed, the disorder started at the time of the operation. In some cases Dr. Savage has seen death follow from a condition resembling general paralysis of the insane.

In a case of surgical operation followed by insanity, in which an anæsthetic has been used, it is very difficult to say which was the exciting cause, the traumatism or the anæsthetic. It appears to me that traumatism has a much larger share in the production of the mania, for in how many thousands of cases is an anæsthetic given for purposes of exploration and examination without any ill effects resulting. In all the cases but one, reported below, iodoform was used in small amount, and on the surface only. In all the cases mania rapidly followed the operation.

The cases of iodoform insanity that have been reported have usually followed the use of large quantities of the drug for a considerable period of time; hence I think that iodoform as a cause of insanity in these cases may be excluded. Whether the anæsthetic had anything to do with the occurrence of the mania I am not prepared to say. In Case II. it had been used several times before without any ill result. In two of my cases the patients had a distinct family history of insanity. In Case V. the patient was an epileptic, and several of the family were likewise affected. In Case III. no family history could be obtained, but the patient had always been queer and at times very excitable. Two of the cases died maniacal, and one case never recovered complete sanity. In one case pneumonia was a complication, and no doubt hastened death. Some may say that the mania was produced by the pneumonia, but mental disturbance was noticed before the supervention of pneumonia, and was either due to the anæsthetic or the surgical injury, or to both causes combined. Three of the cases followed operation on the abdomen and its walls. Whatever was the cause of the mania in the cases reported

¹ Münchener med. Woch., June 5, 1888; quoted in AMERICAN JOURN. OF MED. SCIENCES, July, 1888.

² Loc. cit.