

nature, constant attacks of giddiness occur; in others there is a confusion of ideas and an inability to walk straight, and in a third class there is a feeling of weight and pressure on the head. These symptoms are often combatted by the use of counter irritants and depletion; but the only proper remedy is the removal of the accumulation.

The author then cites several cases in which cerumen had accumulated in one or both ears, in only two of which, however, were there any cerebral symptoms.

Roosa* states the prominent symptoms of inspissated cerumen in the ears to be sudden impairment of hearing, tinnitus aurium, vertigo and pain in the ear, subsequently he says on the authority of Prof. Mayer, that mental hallucinations have in rare instances been relieved by the removal of inspissated cerumen, and then makes the following interesting statement: "I once saw a lady who, though not regarded as a person of unsound mind, seemed to be such, and who complained greatly of tinnitus aurium in all its varieties. I found the ears full of impacted cerumen; but she utterly refused to allow me to remove it and I never saw her but once. It would have been very interesting to show the effect of the relief of the tinnitus upon the mental hallucinations of which she seemed to be a victim."

With this very brief reference to aural authorities, I pass to the consideration of several cases in which notable cerebral symptoms were the immediate result of impacted cerumen.

Case I.—Miss C., age twenty-seven, consulted me Sept. 11th, 1866. I found her suffering from vertigo, pain in the posterior region of the head, insomnia, profound melancholy, and hallucinations of hearing. These latter were of a marked character and were scarcely ever absent during the time she was awake. They consisted of voices which whispered to her words of an exceedingly terrible import, such as "You have lost your soul. You have committed the unpardonable sin. You are to vile to live. Go and kill yourself," etc., etc. Sometimes the sentences were much longer, and occasionally long speeches were apparently made to her. More frequently, however, there was for hours the repetition of some one assertion of her total depravity or an order to destroy herself.

Though at first recognizing the hallucinatory character of these words, the idea of their reality was gradually forced upon her, and they therefore became true delusions. She began accordingly to conceive it to be her duty to act in accordance with the advice she believed herself to be constantly receiving, and hence she made a determined effort at suicide by plunging a pair of scissors into her neck. Fortu-

nately no serious organ was injured, and vigilant watching prevented a repetition of the attempt.

Previous to her coming under my notice she had been subjected to vigorous medical treatment, consisting in the main of cupping and leeching, blistering, purging and the administration of bromide of potassium in large doses. None of these measures were of any avail. Under the idea that there was uterine trouble, and that the cerebral symptoms were of reflex character, she was sent to an eminent gynaecologist, who, however, declared her generative system to be in good condition.

My attention was at once attracted to the ears by the statement made by her mother, that at first there had been some difficulty in hearing, though after a little while this had disappeared. I therefore, began my examination of the ears, and at once found that both meati were obstructed by large plugs of inspissated cerumen. These I softened by the introduction of a few drops of a solution of bicarbonate of soda in glycerine, and the next day by injections removed from the ears masses of cerumen as large each as a marble. The patient was then kept quiet for the remainder of the day, and at bedtime the sixth of a grain of morphine was administered hypodermically so as to insure a good night's rest. On awakening the next morning she announced an entire freedom from dizziness, and that the voices whispering to her were at a greater distance than they had been. The delusions, as to their reality still, however, continued. During the day the pain in the head disappeared, as did also the voices. Little by little the force of the false beliefs was lessened, and after a few days there were no further abnormal, mental or physical symptoms.

Case II.—I. K., a young man, twenty-two years of age, came under my observation January 26th 1870, suffering from severe vertigo, noises in the ears, deafness, and intense mental depression. These symptoms had come on suddenly six days before, shortly after a cold bath in which the water had entered the ears. His expression was one of great anxiety; there was an apprehension of impending evil, and he walked the floor of my consulting room with a staggering gait, his hands pressed to his head, and tears running down his face.

On examining his ears, which I was induced to do mainly from the facts that there were pain, tinnitus, and vocal resonance in addition to the special cerebral symptoms, I discovered that both auditory canals were obstructed with cerumen. A few syringes of warm water removed this, and the symptoms almost immediately disappeared.

Mr. X., a lawyer of Brooklyn, consulted me about three years since for hallucinations of hearing, together with vertigo, pain in the head, confusion of ideas, insomnia, and frequent

* A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of the Ear, etc. New York, 1873, p. 147.