

The crebrum was of nominal consistence, and but little fluid was found in the ventricles,—but as much as four ounces at the base and in the vertebral theca. After I left the dead-room, believing I had seen all that the case afforded, my assistants proceeded to examine the rest of the body.

On making the usual section of the costal cartilages, they were surprised to find pus diffused beneath the muscles on the left side, and fractures of five ribs running in a vertical straight line, a short distance from the junctions with the cartilaginous portions. No re-union had taken place. The pus being examined under the microscope, was found to consist of sanies and granular matter, without any pus corpuscles.

The left lung was adherent inferiorly and posteriorly.

The pericardium contained some effused fluid; and both its internal and external surfaces, as well as the surface of the heart, were rough, and spotted with lymphic deposits. The bicuspid valves had granular deposits, and the arch of the aorta was enlarged. The abdominal organs were all sound.

The preceding case, as illustrative of a class to which importance has accidentally been given, through the ignorance of two members of the medical profession in London, England, may be regarded as of some interest. In three or four English asylums, as well as in some American, autopsic discoveries of similar character and of even greater magnitude, have unexpectedly been made; and it has been incontestably proved that lunatics, affected with general paralysis, or with other forms of intense cerebral disease, may sustain severe and extensive osseous or other lesions, without manifesting the slightest perception of pain, or impairment of muscular activity.

In the present case, there was no reason to doubt that the fractures of the ribs had taken place before the patient's arrival at the asylum. The rectilinear course of the fractures appeared to indicate that they had resulted from a fall forward on some hard, narrow surface, such as the edge of a board or plank. The account given as to his violence and restlessness corroborated the supposition.

This patient not only appeared perfectly free from pain, or muscular impairment, up to the period when symptoms of cerebral, or cerebro spinal, compression shewed themselves, and he kept his bed, but he preached and shouted perpetually.

In one of the English cases above referred to, two surgeons gave testimony to the effect, that no person having two or more fractured ribs could be free from pain, or freely use the costal and other respiratory muscles.