

dance. The condition of the meningeal and cerebral arteries, whatever it may be, is but of short continuance. It would soon terminate in a state of venous remora ; for during the persistence of the attack the circulation is becoming more and more sluggish, the blood is growing darker and darker, the left side of the heart impels forwards comparatively little blood, while the chief stress is borne by the veins. And after death it would only be in conformity to established custom to find the arteries empty, or, as the ancients incautiously fancied, carrying air. Nevertheless there is one strong circumstance which tends to substantiate the position assumed by our author ; it is what he denominates in the above selection as "a state closely approaching syncope." In another place, under the head of "history," he defines it in these words :—

"There is a sign which is very difficult to catch, and this is the death-like pallor which overcomes the countenance immediately before the fall. M. Trousseau called attention to this sign in a recent lecture at the Hotel Dieu in Paris, as one which is diagnostic of epilepsy ; and since this time I have seen it in all the instances, now amounting to twenty-one, in which I have seen the fit from the very beginning."

Connected with this obvious sign, he conceives there is a concurrent failure in the supply of blood to the great nervous centres. But this is by no means an necessary sequitur ; for pallor of the surface, though indicative, as in the ague fit, of retrocession of blood from the capillaries of the general integument, is also an evidence of accumulation of blood in internal parts, or viscera, plus the normal proportion by the amount repelled from without. Nor is his position strengthened by referring the instantaneous loss of consciousness and sensibility to the local anæmia described, for these effects are the well-known results of opiate narcotism or coma, or cerebral plethora, where, so far as we know, no one has yet been venturesome enough to deny that venous congestion existed in full degree. That the cerebral circulation is actually in this be-laboured state, has been a point long since made out in the morbid anatomy of epilepsy. Esquirol and others describe, as intimately connected with it, a "sanguineous plethora" of the vessels within the head, and even our author is constrained to confess that—

"No doubt the veins of the brain and head generally are congested from a very early moment."

He, however, insists upon it being posterior to the inception of the paroxysm, for he adds—

"But there is a moment antecedent to this, in which the death-like paleness of the face—in many cases at least—is a sufficient proof that the veins were emptier than usual before they became congested."