

Having found that iridectomy proved of great benefit in ulcerations and infiltrations of the cornea, by diminishing tension, he next had recourse to this operation for the relief of the excessive intra-ocular pressure in glaucoma.

In 1856, Von Graefe tried iridectomy for glaucoma, and with perfect success; he found that it not only relieved the tension of the globe permanently, but that, if performed in suitable cases, and sufficiently early, all the other symptoms were also permanently relieved.

Iridectomy is now recognized by most oculists of eminence, as the only cure known for glaucoma.

In bringing this subject before you, we will take it up in the following order:—I. Nature of Glaucoma; II. Varieties of Glaucoma; III. Treatment of Glaucoma.

I. NATURE OF GLAUCOMA.

According to Von Graefe, the characteristic symptoms of glaucoma all refer to *increase in the intra-ocular pressure*. These symptoms are:—1st. Hardness of the globe. 2nd. Impairment of the acuteness of vision, and contraction of the visual field. 3rd. Anæsthesia of the cornea. 4th. Dilatation and sluggishness of the pupil. 5th. Flattening of the anterior chamber. 6th. Ciliary neuralgia. 7th. Pulsation of the retinal vessels. And 8th. Cupping of the optic nerve-entrance. The augmentation of the intra-ocular pressure is believed to be caused by excessive secretion (“diffuse imbibition,”) of the aqueous and vitreous humours; the ciliary neuralgia (“ciliary neurosis,”) is undoubtedly caused by pressure upon the ciliary nerves, and the dilatation of the pupil (“iridoplegia”) due to paralysis of the nerves supplying the iris.

In most cases of glaucoma, the process is evidently of an inflammatory nature; but it is yet to be proved that inflammation is an essential part of the glaucomatous process. The most eminent authorities now regard glaucoma as depending on inflammation of the choroid, ciliary body, and iris, resulting in excessive secretion of the aqueous and vitreous humours which cause augmented tension of the globe. Prof. Donders maintains, however, that although most cases of glaucoma are accompanied by symptoms of irido-choroiditis, yet the inflammation is secondary, and that the intra-ocular pressure is the essence of the disease.

Glaucoma is most frequently met with between the ages of 50 and 60, and may be called a disease of old age.

We will see, as we proceed, that glaucoma may appear as a primary or as a secondary disease. In the former case, the two eyes are never attacked simultaneously; but after the disease has attacked one eye, there