

Clinical Department.

Two Cases of Injury of the Ear Caused by Lightning. WILLIAM C. BRAISLIN, M.D., in the *Brooklyn Med. Jour.*

Observed cases of traumatism of the membrana tympani caused by lightning stroke are considered interesting enough to report in some detail. On the 30th of July, 1905, during a severe thunder-storm, a large bathing pavilion at Coney Island, crowded with bathers seeking shelter therein, was struck by lightning. Five persons were killed, one of these being a young man who, with the two ear cases about to be reported, was just entering the shelter between the couple. All the fatal, and most of the injured, cases were in the immediate vicinity of the base of a large flag-pole which projected high above the roof. All had just left the salt water, and were still in wet garments.

CASE 1.—Isaac G., aged 27 years, was first seen at the Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital on August 1, 1905, when he applied for relief of ear symptoms. Two days before he, his wife and several other persons were shocked by lightning, five of them fatally. This man was unconscious for three hours, and had suffered from painful burns and shock. On regaining consciousness he noted a fulness in both ears, roaring tinnitus and impairment of hearing in both ears. The hair was burned from the left side of the occiput. A seared burn appeared on the back of the neck, thence across the left shoulder-blade and down the left arm to the elbow. The burned area on the shoulder was a superficial, irregular mark, the size of a spread hand, purplish red in color.

Ear Symptoms.—These were noticed by both the patients immediately on regaining consciousness. In Case 1 the symptoms of tinnitus and impairment of hearing left the right ear within three or four hours, but became more marked in the left, and so continued until seen by the writer. In this case pain was also felt on the back of the auricle and at its attachment to the head. On the morning following the injury a blood-stained discharge from the left ear appeared, and was present at the time the patient came to the hospital. Examination of the drum revealed a perfectly round perforation 1-8 inch in diameter, slightly anterior to and below its centre, its edges reddened and raw as though a loss of its substance had occurred