

## Original Communications.

*Trephining the Skull in a case of Idiocy with remarks*, by WM. FULLER, M.D., C.M., Prof. of Anatomy, Medical Faculty, University of Bishop's College.

(Read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal.)

GENTLEMEN:—I think that the following case is possessed of more than ordinary interest, as opening a field of enquiry as yet, so far as I know, little explored by medical science.

The subject of this sketch, K.B., a female child, aged two years, came under my notice about the middle of September last, presenting a condition bordering upon extreme idiocy. The parents were Scotch, healthy, and very intelligent. The mother states that she had received a severe fright when three months pregnant, but thought no more of the matter until she noticed the condition of the child some months after it was born, which was at full time. Labor was tedious, lasting 28 hours, and very severe. The forceps were not used. After birth a depression was observed on the left side of the head along the fronto-parietal suture, which disappeared in two or three weeks. The child cried incessantly the first day; it had convulsions on the second day, which occurred about every ten minutes for four days and at longer intervals for two three days more. It had another attack when seven months old after vaccination, another at fourteen months, and one about a month since, from indigestion. She has always enjoyed excellent health, has had none of the infantile diseases, nor any trouble in teething. Her appetite is good as well as the digestion, but she is inclined to be costive. She is well nourished, but her feet and legs have always been very cold and her circulation sluggish. Her head is very small in comparison with her face, and there is a profuse growth of glossy brown hair, which grows very rapidly. The skull is well formed, but remarkably small, the fontanelles are perfectly closed, and were never noticed to be open as in other children. The sutures are elevated into broad ridges, the mastoid and occipital processes are very prominent, and the whole feels like a little old skull. In a state of quietude the face is expressionless, the eyes are divergent, turned upward toward the left side, and continually moving in slight jerks, the pupils are partially dilated and affected by light. The tongue habitually projects be-

tween the lips. She uses the left arm well, but the right is flexed and held tightly to her side, and the fingers of this side are cramped tightly over the thumb which is bent into the palm. When this position of the arm is removed by forcible extension it immediately returns. *When she is asleep this arm and fingers are relaxed* and can easily be extended, where it remains until she awakens. This arm is always colder than the other and has a bluish look when exposed. The peronei muscles are contracted in both legs, which turns the feet outward, and there is an irregularity and stiffness in all her movements. She sucks pap from a spoon and slobbers very much in taking food. She was never known to chew, always sucks, and chokes on the smallest particles of solid food, as a grain of rice, getting into her throat.

She takes no notice whatever of objects placed before her, is quite indifferent to persons, does not know her mother, and is quite happy with anyone, so long as she is fed and held. She does not wink when the hand is suddenly brought toward the eyes, but she is not blind, since the pupils respond to the light. She is startled by a sudden sound and would often cry if any one sneezed or coughed in her presence. Her disposition is happy, and she habitually wears a pleasant smile. When very much pleased she laughs heartily, and goes off into a fit of ecstasy, characterized by straightening herself back, fixing the legs stiff with the toes turned out, turning the eyes and head to the left side, projecting the lips and uttering a peculiar crowing and jerking noise and clapping her right hand with the left. She never made any attempt at locomotion, and would remain content all day in one position, crowing and practicing a few automatic movements of the left arm and the legs. Although her parents had adopted and persevered by every means to extend her association of ideas, they are limited to the following: She appeared to expect food when the spoon was tapped on the dish; when asked to "clap mamma," she would raise the left hand and strike her mother's cheek; when asked to hide, she would turn her face to the right. These motions were automatic and limited, so that it was necessary to place the cheek in the line of motion of her hand. She turned the head when spoken to, was displeased when scolded, and when anything was put