

On removing the skull cap, a large quantity of dark coloured fluid blood escaped ; there was great turgesence of the vessels of the membranes of the brain. The brain was healthy : on removing it a considerable quantity of blood escaped from the spinal canal.

Mouth and Throat.—Uvula somewhat elongated, tonsils slightly enlarged. The rima glottidis was very much contracted. In the larynx, upper portion of the trachea, and in the œsophagus, numerous small portions of undigested oatmeal were observed : the mucous membrane of the air tubes presented everywhere a natural appearance. The lungs and right side of the heart were engorged with dark-coloured blood. The mucous membrane of the stomach, about the pylorus, was softened and eroded. The muciparous glands of the small intestines were enlarged. No other disease was observed in any part of the body. On examining the larynx on the following day, the rima glottidis was found to have recovered its natural dimensions.*

It is clear in this case that the spasmodic closure of the rima glottidis was the immediate cause of death ; no morbid change sufficient to account for death having taken place in any of the viscera ; the turgid state of the vessels of the brain and lungs, as well as the gorged state of the heart, were evidently the effect of the suffocative struggle, and resulted altogether from the manner in which death took place. The symptoms at the commencement are thus proved to be purely spasmodic and it is only when the disease increases in severity, and when general convulsions arise, that the brain or its membranes becomes the seat of disease. It would be interesting on any future occasion, to examine accurately the state of the pneumogastric nerve. The seat of the disease may perhaps be found to exist at the *origin* of this nerve, and topical applications, made as nearly as possible to its origin may be found to constitute an important part of the treatment.*

It seems to me not unimportant to remark, that all the cases of this disease which I have witnessed, have occurred in children either themselves exhibiting marks of the strumous diathesis or sprung from scrofulous parents. This bears practically upon the subject, inasmuch as it enhances the value in treatment of pure air, healthy nutriment, and tonic remedies.

If we take a survey of the several cases of this disease which have been stated, we learn that it varies much in degree, and that its complications are numerous. In its mildest and least complicated form the spasmodic action is confined to the muscles of the glottis, and the treatment consists in improving the general health, and in giving tone to the nervous system. The symptoms in such cases will rarely fail to yield to some of the vegetable or mineral tonics, pure and bracing air, and a well regulated diet ; in some cases I have perceived, I think, advantage to arise from some of the antispasmodic medicines, and amongst these none has appeared to me more beneficial than the old-fashioned medicine, the tinctura fuliginis ; but when the disease is complicated with painful dentition, derangement of the bowels, or any febrile movement in the system, the primary object of the treatment must be to remove these accompanying ailments ; until this be effected the treatment applicable to the spasmodic affection, though it may mitigate its severity, will fail to eradicate the disease. When the spasmodic symptoms extend themselves, and implicate the muscles of the extremities, the disease assumes a more formidable aspect, and soon, if not checked in its progress, paroxysms of general convulsions will establish themselves : in this stage the membranes of the brain become

* Dr. Monro, in his work on the Morbid Anatomy of the brain," describes a variety of acute hydrocephalus ushered in with spasmodic symptoms affecting the muscles of the glottis, and in one case, describing the morbid appearance, he says, "all the nerves at their origin were sound, except the fifth and eighth pairs, which were also of a deep scarlet colour and covered with turgid vessels. On removing the brain, by cutting through the medulla oblongata, a considerable quantity of serum rushed from the upper part of the spinal canal. The vessels of the spinal marrow were turgid those at the cervical portion of a vermillion red colour, and those of the lumbar portion of a dark red hue. The eighth pair of nerves was of deep uniform red along its whole tract, as far as its branches going to the lungs."