

A CASE OF LUMBAR HERNIA.

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Thomas Whelan, four years of age, born in this city, was brought to the Out-Door Dispensary of this Hospital, on the morning of November 22nd, 1873, for the treatment of an abscess, as the father called it. We were directed to the spine as the seat of trouble, from the peculiar aspect of the patient, which is so characteristic of spinal disease. On examination, was found a convex curvature of the spinal column, at about the middle of the dorsal vertebra, which was first noticed by his parents two years ago, and which very gradually increased in size. Eighteen months ago an abscess formed in the left loin, between the crest of the ilium and the last rib; after attaining a considerable size, it was lanced by a surgeon in attendance, and much pus discharged therefrom. A poultice was then applied, and it continued to discharge up to the first of last May, at which time they discontinued the poultice and the wound closed. One month following the closure of the wound, another tumor made its appearance, which gradually increased, and the father, deeming it advisable to have it lanced as before, brought his child to this dispensary. The tumor was found to be situated at that point where the quadratus lumborum and latissimus dorsi intersect the external and internal oblique muscles. It was then about the size of a goose egg, soft and fluctuating to the touch; tympanitic resonance was obtained on percussion, and upon performing taxis forward and inward, it was reduced, followed by a rumbling or gurgling sound, reappearing upon the patient's coughing or making muscular exertion.

From these and other familiar signs it was diagnosed to be a lumbar hernia, due, in all probability, to disintegration of the muscular fibres of these muscles, owing to the long-continued discharge from the abscess above mentioned. After reduction was accomplished, a compress and bandage was applied to retain the intestine in place. The case was presented to Prof. Mott, at his clinic, at Bellevue College, on the following Wednesday, and he confirmed the above diagnosis.

In looking over the literature of the subject, I find that Gross makes mention of but four cases of lumbar hernia. Holmes one, and Erichsen of none.

Gross, Vol. II, page 559: "lumbar hernia is extremely infrequent, the only cases hitherto reported being those of Petit, Pelletan, Cloquet and Chaplain."

Holmes says that in the third *Bulletin des Travaux de la Société de Médecine de Marseille* Dr. Chaplain relates the case of a man, aged sixty, who, after being squeezed between a wall and a carriage, found in his loin a tumor between the crest of the ilium and the last rib. It appeared at first like a chronic abscess, but the presence of intestine was easily ascertained. Mr. Kingdon has seen a case of this kind. The bowels protruded just above the crest of the ilium, at its highest point, about three inches from the spine, just where the quadratus lumborum and abdominal muscles meet. The man was fifty-four years old, tall and thin. He suffered with hæmoptysis and emphysema of the lungs.

The reasons I deem sufficient for publishing this case are as follows:—

- 1st. On account of its rarity.
- 2nd. On account of the peculiar circumstances under which it occurred.
- 3rd. The imminent danger that would necessarily follow the opening of a tumor of this nature.

Correspondence.

(To the Editor of the LANCET.)

SIR,—Surely the *Globe* has "gane gite" on matters medical. When the Medical Bill was before the House it pinned its faith to the Homeopathic sect, and became lacrymose over the fate of their "little bill," and deprecated, with all its thunder, the "big jorum or death" of the "Allopaths," and the cruel fate of Mrs. Squeers' sulphur and treacle. Now it flies off at a tangent, and deserts its first, or second, or third love, medical, in consequence of Mr. Gladstone's expressed intention to study medicine, and under the caption of physiological studies, in this day's issue advises every one to become "his own physician!" It is so easy to "know thyself," and the knowledge of the "action and uses of drugs" and the "laws of health" are so easily acquired, that there is really no difficulty in the way! Really! And then, you know, "regular practitioners" would not "make so much money!" Of course not, when every one becomes a "regular practitioner," and has only one patient, and that one a "dead-head!" The idea is a capital one, and worthy of