

INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION FROM RAW WHEAT.

To the Editor of The Lancet.

SIR,—Permit me to transmit to you the report of a case, wherein a fatal result was near occurring, from a habit on the part of the patient of eating raw wheat.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. L. M'CARTHY, M. D.

Macroom, October 14, 1835.

On Thursday, the 8th instant, I was sent for to visit John Leary, ætat. 35, living at Toames, three miles from hence, a steward in charge of a farm belonging to a gentleman of the name of Penrose. I found the man in bed, laboring under the most agonizing pains, which he referred to the anus, rectum, and loins. He was bathed in sweat; his countenance expressed the greatest anxiety, but he suffered no headache nor delirium. His tongue was coated with a thick white fur, but moist; there was no affection of the chest or of the respiratory faculties, nor any complaint of the stomach, but he had much thirst, urgent desire to urinate, and evacuate the rectum, without ability to effect either. The abdomen felt quite soft on pressure, except over the pubic and left iliac regions, where distention of the bladder, the sigmoid flexure of the colon, and the rectum, could plainly be perceived.

On making an examination per anum, I found its verge considerably swollen and inflamed, with great contraction of the sphincters, and so tender and irritable, that it was with much difficulty that the patient would allow me to proceed with the examination. He said he had been ill during the last three days; that during the first and second days of his attack, he only felt occasional fits of pain in the anus and loins, but that for the last sixteen hours, or thereabouts, he was in extreme agony, with but occasional slight intermissions. He had not had an anal evacuation for the last four days, and from ten o'clock P. M. on the previous evening had not passed any urine up to the time when I saw him, which was one o'clock P. M. on the following day. He said to me, that being for some time previous to his illness superintending the thrashing out of a large quantity of Mr. Penrose's wheat, he had, as was often his habit, eaten some of the grain as he proceeded, and to that he attributed his illness. He went on the second day of his illness to the Macroom Dispensary, where he was ordered a dose of castor oil, but no effect followed its exhibition.

Having by mistake omitted to bring a catheter with me, I sent home for one, and in the mean time proceeded to examine the rectum internally. With considerable difficulty I introduced my little finger, well oiled, into that cavity, and found it extremely distended. It was, in fact, completely blocked up with a hard mass of undigested wheat. The agony which the patient suffered from this exploration, forced me to desist for a short time, when I determined on attempting to extract some of the wheat from the bowel. I accordingly procured a small egg spoon, and having well oiled the handle, introduced it into the rectum, and detached and brought away from the mass about two ounces of semi-masticated wheat. By this means I obtained a little more room, so that I was enabled to force into the rectum a few small pieces of mutton suet, which I allowed to remain until they had melted. This had the effect of lubricating the part and softening the contents of the cavity; so that on a second attempt with the spoon-handle I succeeded in clearing out about ten ounces more of the wheat: the patient all this time complained of almost intolerable suffering. Having desisted for a time in order to allow him some rest, he felt an urgent desire to go to stool, but the attempt was unsuccessful, owing to the tenderness and constriction of the anus. He was, however, able to urinate, and voided about two and a half pounds of fluid.

On making my next examination, I found that the attempts to evacuate the bowels had brought down more of the wheat into the rectum, which was again filled to distention, but the mass was not so hard as in the first instance ; and on again operating I succeeded in removing about twenty ounces more. The patient expressed himself as much relieved. I had by this time in all brought away about two pounds of wheat.

As I found his pulse full, quick, and bounding, I bled him to $\frac{3}{4}$ xxv, when he became faint. I then had the rectum staped for about an hour, and gave him a draught containing an ounce of castor oil, fifty drops of tincture of henbane, and an ounce of cinnamon water. Half an hour afterwards an enema was administered, followed by a purgative draught. Six hours afterwards I found him free from pain, and in a sound sleep. His bowels had been much affected by the enema and medicines, and an immense quantity of wheat, with some white starchy stuff, had passed from his bowels. The anus continued tender for a few days, but by keeping the bowels soluble with small doses of Magnesian salts, he perfectly recovered.

SALIVARY CONCRETION IN THE SUBMAXILLARY DUCT.

To the Editor of the Lancet.

SIR: Should you consider the following case worthy a page in your widely circulated and valuable Journal, the insertion of it will greatly oblige your obedient humble servant,

W. A. ELSTON, Surgeon.

Braybrooke, Northamptonshire, Oct. 20, 1835.

James Whitehead, a young man about twenty years of age, called on me Sept. 4, for my advice respecting a swelling on the right side of his neck, of which he had been the subject at times for four years, but which within the last week had considerably increased in size, and become exceedingly painful.

On examination, I considered it, from its situation, to be an inflamed and considerably enlarged submaxillary gland. It was very painful on being touched, and the patient was the subject of a high degree of fever. I ordered eight leeches to be applied to the tumor, and gave him a calomel bolus and a black draught, with a continuation of a saline aperient mixture. On the 6th I saw him again, and found the swelling more painful, and somewhat increased in size. I ordered the leeches to be again applied, and the purgative medicines to be repeated. Two days after this, on seeing him, he complained to me of pain under his tongue, and on examination there appeared to be an enlargement at about the termination of the submaxillary duct of the right side, and on applying my finger I could distinctly feel a small hard substance. I was at once apprised of the occasion of all the external swelling and violent pain which the man had complained of for so long a time, and, by means of a probe, gently dilating the orifice, and with a small pair of forceps, to my great satisfaction I extracted from the duct a salivary concretion, moulded to the shape of the canal, of about three quarters of an inch in length ; the moment this plug was removed, his mouth was almost filled with pus of a bloody character, and some clear saliva. He experienced immediate relief, and the swelling was at once reduced from the size of a large hen's egg to a mere trifling enlargement, and it is scarcely necessary to add, that in the course of a few days the man felt himself quite well. There was for the first two or three days a frequent discharge, but after this time he could perceive nothing particular either of the pain or discharge.

I felt much interested in the case, for, on inquiry, I found that he had perceived slight pain and swelling at times for four years previous to this date, and occasionally had had severe pain ; and that he scarcely ever sat down to a meal without an almost sudden