

CLINICAL NOTES AND CASES.

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*Case of Malformation of Genitalia with Insanity.* By G. H. SAVAGE, M.D. Lond.

The subjoined case is one of great general interest, for in it we have multiple malformations both in the reproductive organs and also in the rest of the body and head.

This patient was not considered of unsound mind till shortly before her death. The nature of her mental symptoms was closely associated with the malformations.

I purpose first giving a short history of the case, then the conditions found after death, and finally I shall add a few notes about the case and its general bearings.

Elizabeth B., single, 48. No history of insanity in the family. The first symptoms of unsoundness of mind were noticed in January, 1878. This patient was said to have been in general habits and in appearance like other young women; her friends say she was decidedly pretty when 19 years old. At 19 she had a single discharge of blood, supposed to be menstrual; she never had any recurrence of this, and slowly assumed a very peculiar appearance, her features becoming large and coarse, her mouth huge, and her skin rough and masculine. No hair appeared on her face, and none about the pubes, the mammary glands did not develop, and her hands became broad and man-like. She developed in size, and became very large and tall.

Before admission to Bethlem she was in a private asylum, and the doctor there kindly informs me that while there she, on one occasion during the night, tried to take indecent liberties with a female night nurse, and she got into bed with another woman, and said she must have sexual intercourse with her, and tried to effect this in a masculine way.

On admission, the patient was suffering from bronchitis and intractable sickness, she was very helpless, and it was as much as three nurses could do to move her. She had incontinence of urine, the bowels were confined. The only symptoms of mental disease noticed were hallucinations of sight, and probably of hearing. She fancied her mother was in the room with her, and she would address people she supposed to be near. There was no high temperature, and no delirium. It was also a question whether she did not fancy that her food was poisoned, but from her great exhaustion we were unable to push our examination as far as we desired.

She gradually lost power, and died, a week after admission, of bronchitis.

Her general aspect was that of an adult cretin, but there were no real signs of cretinism, no lumps in neck and no idiocy.

Post-mortem. The body presented the general appearance of that of a powerful male; broad chest, large limbs and no breasts. The external organs of generation were those of a woman, large external labia, the right labium exhibited a tumour of the size of a filbert; this proved only to be a mass of fat and connective tissue; the vagina was very large, thin walled and baggy; no clitoris was visible, the meatus urinarius distinct, but surrounded by very few muscular fibres.

On opening the head, the frontal sinuses were found to extend almost the entire height of the frontal bone, and were very wide at the section made to remove the calvarium, the rest of the calvarium was dense and hard. The membranes were normal, and there was nothing to notice in the form of brain or arrangements of the convolutions. The brain substance was also normal in appearance and consistence. On removing the brain, the middle fossæ of the base were found symmetrically studded with large bony prominences, the most marked running for two inches from the antero-lateral part of the fossæ to the centre.

The pituitary body was very large, projecting half an inch above the fossa; the fossa itself was deep, so that the point of the thumb could be completely hidden in it. The body itself was hard and bony, the two clinoid processes were close together, and the basilar process was unusually flat, so that from the posterior clinoid process to the basilar process was almost a perpendicular line, and then the flat basilar process extended straight back. There were no other peculiarities noticed in the head. In the thorax the organs were of large size, the right lung weighing 56 ounces, the left 43, and the heart, which was covered with fat, 15 ounces. There were marked appearances of bronchitis. The liver weighed 96 ounces, the kidneys 10½ and 11½ ounces. In both kidneys were many small cysts, and some wasting of the cortex. The spleen weighed 16½ ounces. The intestines were normal. The bladder was very large and thin walled; it extended far above the rim of the pubes. On passing a sound up the vagina, there was found in the place of the uterus a slight thickening, and the lateral ligaments and ovaries were only to be traced in thickened lines of tissue.

I subjoin the results found by A. Doran, Esq., F.R.C.S., who has dissected the parts for the College of Surgeon's Museum.

The peritoneum over uterus was thick and loaded with fat, so that till dissected off the uterus was not visible. The uterus was found in its natural situation, but was, as Kussmaul describes such cases, infantile, being very small and undeveloped, the cervix hardly to be traced, and the os represented by a pin-hole point, the fallopian tubes impervious, the ovaries atrophied without any signs of their ever having secreted ova.

The vagina loose, thin and baggy, having no rugæ. Bladder large and thin, but not peculiar in any other way.

Mr. Doran intends publishing in detail the report of the anatomy of the parts for the Obstetrical Society.

The chief point of interest from the psychological side is the natural development of the delusion. We have long come to look upon the symptoms of insanity as the development of pre-existing mental states, the result of definite overgrowth or loss of control. Here we have a woman slowly becoming fearfully hideous, obliged to veil her face from the outer world. She naturally believed herself to be noticed, and this natural cause developed into ideas of persecution; the idea that had grown became dominant and uncontrolled, and influenced her whole life. Many cases of persecution grow in the same way. The nervous masturbator, ashamed of his vice, and of himself for indulging it, first looks askance, then fancies others know his weakness and deride him. So we get many of the cases that tell us they are jeered at; and the religiously-educated girl, who gives way to the same vice, and fancies she is no longer natural. Many cases of melancholia again are simply sad out of all proportion to their woes. The woman left by her husband with a small family and expecting another child shortly, naturally becomes the melancholiac who abuses one for extravagance, and wonders who is to pay for all the food consumed.

In the above case the growth of the dominant idea was slow, therefore the prospect of any relief to her mental symptoms was small.

The peculiar shape of the head, associated with bony malformations and over-growths, are interesting, as in this case we got a very typical appearance of cretinism, as far as shape went, and yet no symptoms of cretinism mentally, and this shape of the head was related to over-development of bone, and some German authors have attributed cretinism itself to premature ossification of the base of the skull. The careful dissection of the genitalia have brought the case clearly out of the class of hermaphrodites; it is one of arrest of development as far as a woman was concerned, and after a time a development of the body itself followed the male type. The amorous desires of the patient towards females shows the complete change in the mind and affections, produced by purely bodily conditions.

The case is full of points of interest, but as this is intended merely for a clinical note, I shall not further enlarge upon it.