

XI. *An uncommon Anatomical Observation addressed to the Royal Society, by John Baptift Paitoni, Physician at Venice : Translated from the Italian.*

Read Feb. 14,  
1765. **M**Y duty as physician to the magistrate of health obliging me to be present at the opening of the bodies of those who die suddenly, in order to examine into the hidden causes of their deaths, gives me frequent opportunities of observing remarkable and singular phænomena; one of these, which (amongst many others) I remarked in the course of the present year at the dissection of a young woman, I do myself the honor of communicating to this Society; nor do I doubt its being received with indulgence by them, when I consider that the Royal Society was instituted for the most laudable end of the improvement of arts and sciences, and that of rendering them serviceable to mankind. As the Philosophical Transactions are sufficient proofs of this, I cannot but believe that an uncommon anatomical observation must be acceptable to them.

The subject of this observation was a woman of about 25, of a swarthy complexion, who had from her infancy been subject to a troublesome convulsive cough, and shortness of breath upon any extraordinary exercise; notwithstanding which, she was to all outward appearances of a hale and strong constitution, having a regular and plentiful discharge of her menstrua,

strua, which used to relieve her a few days from her disorder. At the above age, after having been singing and dancing with her friends in the Carnival time, being taken suddenly with a cough more violent than usual, and a shortness of breath, she dropped into the arms of one of her acquaintance, and vomiting at the same time a little serous and frothy liquor, died immediately.

The body being opened the next morning in the presence of some of the college of physicians, the viscera of the lower cavity were first examined and found quite sound; the stomach only was a little extended, owing to what the deceased had eaten a few moments before her death; but the cause of her death was found in the thorax, the right lobe of her lungs being wanting, as will appear by the following description.

The external membrane, which ought to cover the right lobe of the lungs, was of a livid colour, and adhered to the pleura. This membrane being cut through, instead of the true lobe, there was found in its place a membranous bag of a milky colour, without any visible outlet, and much of the same size as that part of the lungs which was wanting. This bag being opened, there came out into the thorax a serous fluid, void of smell, which being spread upon the table was found, as to figure, colour, and substance, much to resemble a cuttle fish; nor do I doubt but some whimsical naturalists, who make it their business to surprize the common people, by the relation of miraculous events, would have declared that they saw part of the lungs changed into a cuttle fish.

It

It being evident from this, that there was in the thorax of this young woman a receptacle of serosity (if I may so call it) contiguous to the sound lobe, it will not appear strange that, from the violent agitation caused by the singing and dancing, the bag burst, and that the sound lobe, which alone used to perform the office of breathing, being hindered, by the serous matter which came out, from exerting its influence, a suffocation ensued. The causes of her habitual disorder are equally obvious. In a perfect state of health there should be two lobes, which together receive the blood from the right side of the heart, and transmit it to the left, reducing it in this journey, by their joint action, to a state of perfection. One of the lobes therefore being wanting, the other must have endured considerable pain in receiving the whole quantity of blood from the heart, and whenever violent exercise made a quicker circulation necessary, the blood must have been stopped, and hence arose the aforementioned shortness of breath. Nor is it less clear how the cough came to be so frequently troublesome, the motion of the fluids being disturbed, and the delicate fibres of the trachea perpetually irritated by this defect. And this is the true reason why her menstrua being very plentiful were for some time very beneficial to her, by causing a great diminution of blood, and leaving a quantity of fluids in the veins more proportioned to the canals of a single lobe.

These things, from the dissection of the body, are evident enough, but it still must seem wonderful to have found a young woman without one of the lobes, that bag of serous matter containing nothing in it which

could deserve the name of even the most imperfect one. I know very well that the lungs are subject to many defects; and that there are often found in them tumours, callousnesses, adhesions, stones, ulcers, worms, tubercles, wastings, and the like; but none of these causes could hardly have made the same viscus lose every sign of its former state. The young woman being deficient in this lobe, it is surprising how the other can have performed its office in maintaining life, and have appeared upon examination of the common and natural size, and its vessels not at all dilated by the quantity of blood which they received. And as nature has made nothing in vain, we cannot but be astonished to find that single which ought to be double, as if a man was to have one kidney instead of two; much more wonderful is it that, in so delicate and important an action as respiration is, one lobe only of the usual size and structure should have performed the functions of both. I know very well that those, whose misfortune it has been to have part of their lungs only slightly disordered, must have the other considerably affected; but besides that there may have been occasionally relief given, they cannot for a long time have supported the want of a lobe, without giving visible signs of so great a defect. In this case we have reason to believe that this young woman was born with this monstrous deficiency; what is strange is, that she should have come to her full growth with it, and have been apparently healthy, except the convulsive coughs and shortness of breath. These are phenomena, which might be accounted for from obstructions in the lower cavity;

cavity; at least, the brown yellowish tinge of the face, is a common symptom in these obstructions; but in this case it appears to have been owing to the want of one of the pulmonary lobes, the other not being alone sufficient to work the blood, and give it the necessary redness.

Short and imperfect as this relation is, I hope, nevertheless, that it will prove sufficient to convince the Royal Society of the great regard, which I, with justice, have for so useful and praise-worthy an institution.

---

XII. *An Account of a New Improvement of the Portable Barometer. By Edward Spry, M. D. of Totness, Devon. In a Letter to the Right Honourable James Earl of Morton, President of the Royal Society.*

My Lord,

Read Feb. 28,  
1765. **T**HIS barometer of my invention, and construction, I presume, will answer every intention of the usual, and more complex portable one, and in a much more simple and durable manner, viz. The double round at the bottom makes it difficult (even if we endeavour thereto) to cause an ascent of air, or a fall of mercury into the bowl; which, if the latter circumstance were to attend it, the quicksilver, from the bowl's construction, must remain therein, thence of no in-