

LOCATING NEEDLES BY THE X-RAY.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Faribault, Minn.

M. C.—Age 32, nationality Irish. Admitted to Minnesota School for the Feeble-Minded, August 6, 1880. High grade imbecile, partially deaf. No early history on record.

Complained frequently of pain in right leg below knee, at various times, and in October, 1895, was reported at dispensary and the following record, in effect, was made:

Swelling on the right leg below middle third, between tibia and fibula. Scar of an old opening just below head of fibula, with a similar one two inches internally to this and one-half inch below. The symptoms indicated lesion of bone and a hard substance was detected by pressure upon swelling. Alternative treatment was prescribed. No improvement followed, and on November 5th the patient was placed under an anaesthetic. An incision was made by Dr. J. W. Bailey and a piece of a number one needle removed.

November 25th, thought another piece of needle could be detected lower down.

December 26th, old scar opened.

March 5th, 1896, small pieces of bone came away.

March 15th, swelling and tenderness again in upper part of region, very painful to touch.

June 1st, Dr. Bailey placed patient under ether and removed six pieces of needles.

June 17, wound healing, but indications are that one needle remains.

February 2, 1897, patient under care of Dr. Lucy A. Wheeler. Leg swollen and painful; poultices applied. Wound again opened and discharged freely, but no foreign material removed.

Patient has been accustomed to care for my own children, and often called my attention to fact that there was a needle in her leg, and sometimes would be obliged to rest after going up or down stairs. Examination showed upon one such occasion that the end of a needle was actually protruding, and I easily removed it with a pair of pliers. We were finally convinced that there was a large supply of needles in the vicinity of these wounds, and I took ad-

vantage of the first opportunity afforded for an X-ray diagnosis, which was made on February 17th, 1898. The resulting radiograph is shown by figure 1. A careful examination of the photograph disclosed what appeared to be the projections of thirty-five different needles and parts of needles.

On March 29th, Drs. Wheeler and Warren placed the patient under ether and made an incisure about three inches long over the region already indicated, and removed twenty-nine needles and pieces of needles, as shown in figure 2. Although it was evident that the foreign pieces were not all removed, they were so scattered that the operation was very tedious, and it was not considered wise to keep the patient under ether longer, two hours having been consumed in removing the number stated. The wound was treated antiseptically and healed nicely without the formation of pus.

The manner and cause of the insertion of the needles is an absolute mystery. Patient has been an inmate of the school since fourteen years of age, and we have never known anything during the time of her residence that would give any light on the subject. She denies ever intentionally inserting them. The only explanation she gives is, that when she was a little baby she acquired these treasures by rolling around on the floor.

"Caresses are of great power for good or evil and must be reserved as rewards or stimuli. But injudiciously applied, they break the continuity of commenced efforts, cause a diversion from the task and a relaxation of the will; it gives the child an exaggerated idea of his own worth, or of that of his doings, and profoundly spoils his moral nature; moreover, a number of children cannot be caressed at all without danger, owing to certain nervous anomalies. Great discretion and reserve are required from teachers and others in this respect, for the moral government of idiots. Here once more we see how difficult it is to fill the place of a mother; in her absence, caresses, as an incentive to progress, are not pettings, and less the selection of pets."—(Seguin.)