Clinical Records

ABSCESS OF TONGUE

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THE following case is reported because of the seeming rarity of the condition.

On *October 27th* the patient complained of tenderness and swelling of the left parotid and submaxillary glands.

On *October 29th* he had difficulty in swallowing solid foods.

On *November 1st* the patient was admitted to hospital. The tongue was so swollen that it protruded between the teeth. The swelling appeared to be mainly on the left side and was thought to be due to obstruction of lymphatic drainage. The teeth were in a bad state of decay. The submaxillary glands were slightly enlarged and tender, but there was now no swelling of the parotid glands. He was then unable to swallow fluids. Temperature 99·8°F. Pulse 96. Respiration 22.

In order to facilitate the examination of the mouth and tongue, a general anæsthetic was administered. The breath was foul and the mouth was full of a thick mucoid secretion. At the junction of the floor of the mouth and left side of the tongue, about one inch in front of the anterior pillar, an area was found which suggested a pointing abscess. Under pressure a small quantity of dark, foul smelling material was exuded. An incision was made over this area and about ½ oz. of pus was liberated. Immediately after this the tongue was seen to be much smaller and by the following day there was only very slight swelling on the left side of the tongue and the patient was then able to take some solid food.

The foul odour of the pus was very suggestive of the infection having come from the teeth. Possibly the swelling of the glands was, in the first place, due to primary infection of the tongue, but it seems remarkable that on examination, although the tongue was so much swollen, most of the glandular involvement had subsided.

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