CASE
OF
POPLITEAL ANEURISM,
IN WHICH
THE TEMPORARY LIGATURE WAS EMPLOYED.

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COMMUNICATED BY
MR. ASTLEY COOPER.

Read Feb. 29, 1820.

SOMETIME ago I performed the operation for popliteal aneurism, using two ligatures, and dividing the artery in the space between them. Considerable irritation of the system, and sloughing of the part ensued, and although my patient ultimately recovered, he was confined near four months. This case greatly discouraged me, and when I read the experiments and suggestions of Mr. Travers, in the Fourth and Sixth Volumes of the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, I was determined to put those suggestions to the test of ex-

perience on the first opportunity that might offer ; accordingly I adopted the temporary ligature in the following case, of which I shall give you the general result.

At 12 o'clock, June 6th, 1818, in the presence of Mr. Evans and Mr. Carrey, respectable surgeons of this town, I performed the operation for popliteal aneurism on L. Lewis, aged 32, a seafaring man. The ligature was applied at the usual place, and the wound dressed with simple ointment.

On the 7th, at twelve o'clock, that is, in twenty-four hours from the operation, the before-mentioned gentlemen being again present, the ligature was removed without any difficulty, and the edges of the wound were brought together with adhesive plaster. No pulsation was felt in the tumor. It is proper here to observe, that a small piece of thread was interposed between the ligature and the artery, as was done in the experiments by Dr. G. Jones ; and that the thread so used greatly facilitated the removal of the ligature.

June 8th, 3rd day. There was still no pulsation in the tumor ; he had slept all night ; was quite cheerful ; and expressed a wish to get out of bed. On the morning of the 12th, indeed, I found him, to my surprize, sitting at the window. In

eleven days the wound was quite healed. I met him six months from this time, and he told me, that he never enjoyed better health ; that he could go to the mast-head with as great facility as at any period of his life.

In the Ninth Volume of the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, two cases are published by Mr. Travers, in which the temporary ligature was employed ; and from the result of one of those, it appears that he is now adverse to that mode of practice. He adds his inferences, which it is unnecessary to transcribe at length.

1st. “ That the removal of a ligature upon the femoral artery of the human subject, in twenty-seven hours is followed by a return of the circulation in the vessel.”

2d. “ That a ligature applied for twenty-seven hours upon the human femoral artery, has scarcely afforded a perceptible impediment to the blood.”

3d. “ That suppuration is as certain to take place, when the ligature is removed, after a few hours, as if it were left to be cast off.”

Every deference is due to the authority of Mr. Travers ; however, in the present instance, I can-

not but question the general truth of his deductions, for in the case here related, the artery was rendered completely impervious, though the ligature was allowed to remain only twenty-four hours, and no suppuration ensued.

Carnarvon,
December 1, 1819.