ACCOUNT

OF THE

EXTRACTION OF A LOOSE SUBSTANCE,

CONSISTING

PARTLY OF BONE AND PARTLY OF CARTILAGE,
FROM THE ELBOW-JOINT.

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Bridgnorth, February 15, 1814.

DECEMBER 27, 1813. — Valentine Bishen, aged 30, who resides at Worfield, near this town, about seven years ago perceived a violent pain and lameness in the right elbow-joint, occasioned by a loose substance, which appeared to slip between the opposing surfaces of the radius and of the outer condyle of the humerus. The extraneous body remained in this situation about ten or fifteen minutes, and confined the arm immoveably mid-way between flexion and extension; after which

it suddenly receded, and the joint became apparently perfect and capable of performing its various motions. The same circumstance having afterwards very frequently happened, particularly during the time the joint was in violent motion, he became apprehensive of being quite lame, and was almost afraid of making use of the joint. When I examined the parts, I could sometimes perceive the loose substance in the situation described, and sometimes it would recede within the joint and be no longer evident to the touch; and whether it was within the general cavity or between the two bones alluded to, very little external difference was obvious.

Having explained the nature of the disease to the patient, and the application of pressure being in this instance inadmissible, he consented to submit to the operation, which was performed in the following manner: Having pressed the extraneous substance with my finger, with the view to protrude it as much as possible, and having retracted the superincumbent skin, so that the wound externally and that in the joint might not correspond after the operation, I made an oblique incision down to the lateral ligament, to the extent of an inch. The ligament and capsule were next divided, and part of the synovia escaped. A silver director was then introduced into the cavity of the joint under the loose substance, which, by employing the instrument gently as a lever, was readily

extricated. The wound being closed was dressed with adhesive plaster and the uniting bandage; the arm, moderately bent, was put into a sling; and, lastly, rest and abstinence were enjoined.

December 30.—By an accidental violent motion of the arm during sleep last night the wound bled, and was very painful. Before that happened it had been extremely easy. The dressings being removed, I found the wound had been torn open by the accident. It was dressed as before. Pulse 84.

January 6, 1814.—On this day the wound was healed, the bandage and sling discontinued; and the patient has ever since enjoyed the easy and perfect motion of the joint, and felt neither local nor general inconvenience from the operation.

The substance extracted is flat and nearly of the size and shape of a vomic nut (*Strychnos nux vomica*. *Lin.*), and consists of bone of a brittle quality, covered with cartilage. Numerous shaggy filaments, resembling small vessels, are attached to one of its flat sides; and on the centre of both is a slight indentation, produced by the pressure of the surfaces of the joint, between which in its ordinary state it lay. Its margin is smooth all round, like a stone subjected to the attrition of contiguous surfaces in the bed of a river. The filaments probably constituted a slight union between it and

the parts to which, they were opposed; and I suspect they confined the extent of its movements.

The manner in which the disease was produced in this instance is not so satisfactory as in some others, where it had been preceded by some accidental violence; for the patient was never sensible of any injury having been inflicted on the parts, and supposes that it must have existed from the period of his infancy.