A CASE
OF
INCONTINENCE OF URINE,
OF
NINE YEARS' DURATION,
CURED BY EXTERNAL PRESSURE.

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Read July 18, 1815.

THE patient was a young gentleman of 13 years of age, who had been subject to incontinence of urine for nine years, during which time he never passed a single day, without several involuntary discharges of his urine, and even during the night the same unfortunate and involuntary evacuation constantly took place.

In consequence of this, his life became truly uncomfortable. He had to submit to pain from inflammation coming on in the neighbouring parts, and from consequent excoriations; and he suffered much from the disagreeable urinary effluvia which constantly passed by evaporation from his clothes and from his bed.

But that was not all the evil which arose from

this distressing state. He had to bear up in his mind under shame and vexation; the trying to hide what could not be concealed, gave him unavailing anxiety; and the sneers of his playfellows and of servants, were, he has often told me, almost insupportable. He was even refused admission into boarding-schools; and a shyness of manners, with a wish for solitude and retirement, gradually came on, and most likely had entirely changed, or greatly subdued the energy of his mind.

Many physicians and surgeons had been consulted, and various were the means employed. Tonics, cold bathing, blisters at one time to the sacrum, and at another to the perinæum, had been applied, and opiates, with a view to break in upon a habit which by degrees had become established, were fairly and freely tried, but without any success.

He was sent to London to be under my care, and as I could have him in my house, so as to be constantly near him, I determined to employ pressure. The jugum penis did not answer the purpose, because it strangulated the glans so much that it could not be endured for the necessary length of time. I was, therefore, obliged to have recourse to some invention of my own, and it consisted of the following simple apparatus.

I selected a bougie of a size large enough to fill his urethra, from which I cut about two and a half, or three inches. Having placed that on the outside of the under part of the penis on a line parallel to the canal, with its point projecting a short way beyond the glans to avoid as much as possible any pain from pressure, I passed straps of adhesive plaister around, (first at the point of the penis, and afterwards continuing strap after strap the length of the piece of bougie,) and pulled them so tight as to press the bougie close in upon the urethra, so that no space was left by which urine could pass.

This was done at ten o'clock at night, and at three o'clock he called me out of bed, having a great desire to pass urine. I removed the straps, &c. and when he had emptied his bladder, I applied others in the same manner. The next desire for this evacuation was about seven o'clock, and the next again at eleven o'clock in the forenoon. After each evacuation the pressure was renewed without any unpleasant symptom, and in three days he was cured of incontinence of urine.

How far such treatment might answer the purpose of cleanliness and convenience, in paralysis, I have as yet had no experience, but when a case of that kind comes under my care, I shall not hesitate in giving it a trial.