CASE
OF A
GUN-SHOT WOUND,
AND
FRACTURE OF THE TIBIA,
IN WHICH
A SETON
WAS SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED IN PROMOTING A CURE;

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COMMUNICATED BY

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INSULATED cases often become extremely valuable in establishing general doctrines, or in illustrating practical rules in medicine; for by supplying one link in the chain, they enable a series of facts to be classed together, with which no connection had previously been established. On this account, the following case may not be considered unworthy of being read before the Society; for although the use of a seton in this instance could have afforded no probable grounds for suggesting

the practice as a general one in ununited fractures, yet it shews the utility of it under particular circumstances, and may illustrate some of the facts and observations which have been made on the subject by Mr. Wardrop, in the Fifth Volume of the Transactions of this Society.

An officer of the 95th regiment at the battle of Orthes, received a musket-shot through the right leg. The ball entered on the anterior spine of the tibia, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from its articulation with the foot. It passed obliquely outwards through the substance of the tibia, injured the fibula, and came out towards the exterior edge of that bone. The healing process went on without any interruption for one month; during which time several small exfoliations took place. At this period, when walking in the room with crutches, he suddenly fell, and fractured both bones at the site of the wound. A most violent attack of inflammation immediately succeeded, accompanied with such a degree of general fever, as to produce delirium. Fomentations and poultices were applied to the wound, and large evacuations of blood, with a rigid antiphlogistic treatment, were employed. By these means the inflammatory symptoms were subdued, healthy supuration came on, the cure again went on progressively, the bones had apparently united, the outer wound had entirely healed, and the inner had nearly cicatrized. At this time, being about two months from the time of the fracture, the limb be-

gan to swell, the discharge, from being of a good consistence, became thin and watery, and he felt at times slight rigors, a complete stop being thus put to the process of consolidation in the bone and to the healing of the soft parts. On introducing a probe into the anterior wound, it passed through a canal in the substance of the tibia, and the point could be felt at the cicatrix of the exterior wound. As it was conceived that the ossific process was not likely to be completed, and that the discharge of matter produced not only much local pain, but a great deal of general irritation, a seton was introduced, which entered the anterior wound, passed through the canal formed in the bone, and was brought out at the cicatrix of the exterior wound. A most favourable change took place almost immediately. Many small portions of bone were brought away by the seton, which was drawn through every day; the discharge soon lessened in quantity, and became again of good consistence; the swelling of the limb also subsided entirely. As the canal in the bone filled up, the seton was gradually lessened, till at last, about five weeks from the time of its introduction, it was altogether withdrawn. Both wounds healed up soon after. The limb remained somewhat shortened, but the union of the bone was at this time completed.