

the present case, to be inserted, if you think proper, in that very useful and judicious work. It may serve as an additional proof of the great injury the abdominal viscera may occasionally receive from external blows; and at the same time show us the propriety in similar cases, of not trusting simply to evacuations; as rest, an anti-phlogistic regimen, and the other usual methods of obviating inflammation and its consequences, seem to be essentially necessary to the cure.

Old Jewry, London,

Nov. 4, 1785.

VI. *An Account of a Suppression of Stools and Urine, occasioned by an Accumulation of hardened Fæces in the Rectum. By Mr. Isaac Oliphant, Surgeon in London.*

MR. P—, the patient, whose case I am about to relate, was in his sixty-sixth year, of a costive habit, robust, and of a swarthy complexion, till about the latter end of November, 1784, when he became ruddy in the face. His good state of health, however, continued; but his wife expressed her fears that

that some disease was portended by this change of complexion. Accordingly, at the latter end of January following, he was attacked with an inflammation of the membrane lining the meatus externus auditorius, which ended in suppuration. Under both of those states he was in great misery from the pain, and during the latter, was troubled with much offensive discharge.

For this complaint various means were employed by different practitioners, for several months, without material benefit. At the beginning of October, the pain was extended to the muscles moving the lower jaw, which was now in a great measure locked, as it were, and could not be exercised in the extent of motion it was capable of, without considerable pain; on which account he could not masticate his usual food, and was therefore obliged to lay aside a sort of coarse wheaten bread he had hitherto made use of to prevent stiffness.

On the 25th of October he was directed to take a grain of opium at bed time, with a view to relieve the pain in the ear; and for some days this dose was sufficient for the purpose, but it soon became necessary to increase it to two grains; and this dose was continued till

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November the 18th, when he was advised to cover the ear with a saturnine poultice, which afforded him great relief.

The opium at this time causing obstinate constipation, notwithstanding the use of Glauber's salt, of which he had generally taken half an ounce every day, and the pain, by the use of the poultice, being much lessened, he almost entirely left off the opium.

On the 12th, on account of his costiveness, he was advised to take a table-spoonful of Castor oil, which soon passed through his bowels, and was voided with some liquid contents tinged with fæces.

During the 13th, 14th, and 15th, he was getting worse and worse with respect to stools, and he had only twice a little liquid discharge after the 12th.

On the 16th he could not void his urine freely, or in any tolerable quantity. In the morning of the following day he made only a little water; and in the course of this day he was seized with pain about the anus, which gradually increased in violence, with frequent attacks of tenesmus (but without any evacuation by stool) which were attended with a rack-

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ing pain, that obliged him to cry out till the efforts ceased.

On the 18th, the attacks recurred with more frequency and feverity, attended with pain in the back and pubis, and with a great desire to make water, as at the time he was relieved he had not passed a drop for forty-three hours.

This day, while I was absent, an apothecary was called in, who sent him a laxative mixture, to relieve what he supposed to be the inward piles, and advised him to sit over the steam of warm water.

In the evening being informed of his situation, and that the suppression of urine still remained, I took with me catheters and bougies to relieve him. I found him in one of his efforts to expel his stool and urine, and crying out from the agony, which lasted a considerable time after the endeavours went off. His pulse at this time beat only forty-five strokes in a minute.

On asking him a few questions, and taking an external view, I suspected the case to be a collection of hardened fæces in the rectum, and that the complaint was of long standing; the imagined stools that he had on the 12th

and since, seeming to have been only an escape of the thin contents of the intestines between the ball of excrement and rectum, several cases of which kind had occurred to, and used to be related in his lectures, by the late Dr. Hunter, whose memory must be ever gratefully revered by his pupils.

I procured some oil and common paper, and after besmearing my fore-finger with the oil, it was introduced into the rectum, and there I found the impediment, a large plug of hard fæces. The finger was pushed into the middle of this, and hooked, and every possible manœuvre used to break it down into less pieces, many of which were brought away, but not without great pain to the patient. When about half was extracted, and the remainder much divided, as far as could be reached, a clyster of warm water was attempted to be thrown up, but before the whole of it was injected, we were obliged to desist, from his having a motion to go to stool. The effort to evacuate went off, however, but returned in five minutes, when an effectual evacuation took place, and a quantity of urine flowed out, insensibly. On examination, there was found to remain a
 large

large mass, which was divided, and soon after voided in the same manner as the first.

A mixture of ol. ricini, manna, and soluble tartar, in mint water, was now prescribed, and removed the costiveness effectually; and on the 19th, he was well with respect to his bowels, and the voiding of his urine, a little soreness only remaining.

The account of the ear-ach, and of the remedies employed to relieve it, seemed to me necessary to give an adequate idea of all the circumstances of the case. The existence of hardened fæces, is perhaps not sufficiently attended to; and I have heard of one instance in which it was overlooked by several practitioners, but was at last successfully removed. Cases of this kind, however, do not always terminate so happily; and I remember the late Dr. Hunter used to relate the case of a lady advanced in years, in whom symptoms of irritation came on, the cause of which was suspected to be a schirrus in the pelyvis; and the real nature of the complaint was not ascertained till after death, when it was found to have depended on indurated fæces.

The obstruction of the urine in the case I have related was certainly mechanical, from

the fæcal ball pressing on the membranous part of the urethra; for, as soon as part of the ball was voided, the urine was insensibly poured forth, and was afterwards freely discharged by the regular action of the bladder, when the impediment was entirely removed.

The florid countenance supervening at this patient's period of life, seems to give an idea of the manner of an attack of apoplexy, which would most likely have been the case here, (as he had many of the characterizing marks of predisposition to this disease,) if the bulk of blood had been as much increased in the internal circulation of the head, as it was in the external; for, in the former it would, perhaps, have induced hemorrhage; whereas in the latter it probably disposed only to inflammation.

The above case may serve as a lesson to us to investigate complaints about the parts concerned in it, by manual certainty. There surely is no disagreeable submission a practitioner ought to evade that has a real tendency to relieve his afflicted patients. I am satisfied it was the only alternative in the above case; and in similar circumstances the finger appears to be the best instrument we can employ; for independent of the confined room from the contraction

contraction of the sphincter ani, the rectum in this case was so irritable, that even the cautious infinuation of the finger produced great pain, and this must have been much increased if the scoop commonly employed in such cases had been incautiously introduced.

VII. *Two Instances of the Effects of drinking pure Spirits, in repeated and large Quantities. Communicated in a Letter to Dr. Simmons, F. R. S. by John Rollo, M. D. late Surgeon in the Royal Artillery.*

THE following cases will serve to show the effects of drinking pure spirits, in repeated and large quantities. The first is the case of a man of an athletic constitution; the second that of a patient whose bowels had been previously debilitated by disease. The last was communicated to me by Mr. Cruikshanks, an ingenious surgeon of the Naval Hospital, in Barbadoes. I had occasion to mention another case of the same kind, in my observations on the means of preserving and restoring health, in the West Indies. Cases of this sort may be deemed rare occurrences; but it seems probable