CASE

OF

INGUINAL ANEURISM,

CURED BY TYING THE EXTERNAL ILIAC ARTERY.

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COMMUNICATED BY

MR. HODGSON.

Read June 25, 1816.

THOMAS Gater, an active muscular man, of a spare habit of body, and 56 years of age, was admitted into the Bath City Infirmary, on Saturday April 20th, 1816. His occupation of a smith has required at times great exertion, and his employment at the forge has exposed him to sudden changes of temperature. In October last, in fixing an iron roof over a large oven, he twisted his right knee, and in consequence of this strain, he was lame about a week. After this accident he frequently felt pains in the right groin, but they did
not particularly attract his notice, as he attributed them to rheumatism. About the end of January, he was attacked suddenly with a slight paralytic affection. He had difficulty in articulating, and could not write correctly what he wished to express. He was confined to his bed about a week, but recovered by means of venæsection, purgatives, and low diet. During his confinement he had very acute pain in the right thigh and groin, different from the pain which he had before experienced, and he discovered a pulsating tumor in the groin about the size of a pigeon’s egg. He resumed his business but was lame, and suffered constant pain in the tumor, which gradually became larger. About the middle of March, after considerable exertion, the whole limb began to swell, the tumor increased very much, and its pulsation was so violent that he thought it lifted his whole body. From this period the progress of the disease has been alarmingly rapid.

The thigh and leg are enlarged to twice their natural diameter. The tumor is extremely painful, and projects above the general swelling of the limb, about the size of a large lemon. It reaches above Poupart’s ligament, and extends about three inches down the thigh. It can be emptied by pressure, but is distended again immediately the pressure is removed. The nature of the disease is obvious both to the sight and touch.
This patient was admitted under the care of my friend Mr. Cruttwell; but as he had unfortunately been obliged on account of ill health, to retire for a time from professional duties, the case devolved upon me.

I enjoined rest, venæsection and an aperient; and advised that the operation should not long be delayed. The man consented, and on Monday the 22nd, at eleven o'clock, I tied the external iliac artery, in the presence of Mr. White, Mr. Norman and several other professional friends. I performed the operation according to the mode recommended by Mr. Abernethy, except that I used only one ligature, very thin, and of silk. The pulsation in the tumor ceased immediately after the ligature was secured; and, as soon as the patient was in bed, he said, "Sir, my pain is gone, I am quite easy."

He was comfortable the whole of the day, and had a tolerable night; but the next day (23rd), symptoms of peritoneal inflammation came on, and it was necessary to have recourse to the lancet.

On the 25th, he was free from fever, and no untoward symptom subsequently occurred.

The heat of the aneurismal limb, two hours after the operation, was three degrees higher than in the
sound limb. The next day the temperature was equal on both sides. On the 25th, the aneurismal limb was one degree colder than the other, and this was the greatest difference observed in the temperature of the limbs at any subsequent period during the cure.

The ligature was detached on the 8th of May. The upper part of the wound was well in a month; but a small portion about the size of a sixpence, at the lower part, was slow in healing, and did not completely cicatrize till about seven weeks from the date of the operation.

The contents of the tumor were absorbed. The swelling of the limb subsided. A month after the operation, the limb was reduced to its natural size. No tumor projected above the surface, but a hardness about the bulk of a walnut could be felt in the groin, and upper part of the thigh. This hardness gradually diminished, and the patient was discharged cured on the 15th of June.

The external iliac artery has been tied so frequently in this country, and the success of the operation is so fully proved by the cases recorded by my friend Mr. Hodgson in his valuable work on the diseases of arteries, that a detail of the daily proceedings in the above case would have been tedious and uninteresting; but, as the operation must be regarded as one of the most formidable
which a surgeon is likely to be called upon to perform, and as a degree of scepticism is said still to prevail in France, respecting the successful treatment of aneurism by English surgeons; it is perhaps essential to the general establishment of the operation, that at present the result of every case of this description should be communicated to the public. I have therefore thought it probable that the foregoing brief history might not be unacceptable to the Society.