

membranous portion of the urethra, by the one and continuous stroke of the knife. This should be the surgeon's aim, for if the knife be introduced again and again with the intention of clearing the staff, the difficulties of completing the operation are greatly increased, the urethra is wounded and notched in several parts. Shreds of it may hang into the groove of the staff, and it may be so impaired that the remaining connecting tissues may fail to resist the efforts essential to the completion of the operation and give way, and so the surgeon may be foiled in reaching the bladder." This, however, ought not to happen as long as the staff is adhered to; *that should on no account be lost sight of*, like the poor compassless benighted mariner described by the poet, who looked to one solitary star alone for the guidance of his struggling ship, the operator should say, "if I lose thee I'm lost," and he who sticks to the staff will in all probability reach the stone and save his patient. No matter how awkward and bungling may be his manipulation, no matter how vague and imperfect his knowledge of anatomy, no matter how feeble and faulty his incisions, provided, of course, they are not carried too far, if he sticks to the staff and *that that is in the bladder and on the stone*, he ought, if he be not a fool, or something worse, to feel and remove the latter. Sir Henry Thompson says, that "the most frequent cause of death after lithotomy in children is peritonitis and constitutional exhaustion," and that is doubtless so in England; but the deaths I witnessed or heard of among children in India, appeared to me rather to be due to shock, hæmorrhage, or injury of the rectum, and I did not find that a few years one way or the other materially affected the result. Advanced age, on the contrary, does so terribly, by preventing union of the perineal wound, inducing irritative fever, diminishing the desire for food, and the capacity for sleep, and ultimately paving the way for sub-acute peritonitis or incurable exhaustion.* My two fatal cases were both old and feeble, and the last was an old man who had to be carried by his son, and who could not, in any case, long survive his sufferings. Yet he recovered well from the effects of the chloroform and the shock of the operation, but the wound in the bladder refused to

* Barnes, the celebrated editor of the *Times*, having suffered for years from stone, was at length persuaded to submit to an operation, which, although it was most skilfully performed by Liston, gave such a shock to his nervous system that he sank under it, and died on the 7th of May, 1841, in his fifty-sixth year.—Andrew's History of British Journalism, vol. ii., p. 84.

"Suffering for years" is a bad preparation for such an operation, and shock to the nervous system is much more likely to occur and prove fatal after the powers of life are on the wane than before. For other instances of great men in whom delay proved dangerous, see the preface, &c., to Mr. Allarton's "Median Lithotomy," and Traver's "Constitutional Irritation."