

SOME THERAPEUTIC (SURGICAL) NOTES.

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A NEW EXPEDIENT FOR DEALING WITH TOUGH AND INTRACTABLE STRICTURES OF THE URETHRA.

I HAVE recently had to deal with a long-recurring, exceedingly dense, and tough cicatricial contraction of the urethra through which, after tedious effort, I succeeded in passing a filiform whalebone-bougie. Over this, as a guide, I endeavored to pass a variety of urethral instruments, but could coax nothing in the shape of a metallic instrument through the dense tissue. I then opened the deep urethra by perineal section, having the fine whalebone as a guide. Over the slightly bulbous extremity of this filiform bougie I tied tightly a piece of fine, braided silk. Withdrawing this through the urethra in a forward direction, I pulled through with it the silk, which I then proceeded to utilize as a fine chain saw, in the same way that Abbe has succeeded in attacking œsophageal strictures. With the fingers of one hand in the deep perineal opening, and with the other hand free outside, I could pull the silk backward and forward. Using it in this way as a very fine chain-saw, I succeeded in enlarging the canal. After repeated efforts the stricture was divided to a degree permitting a threading of the silk through the eye of a tunneled urethrotome, which was at last passed down through the urethra, its blade separated, and the obstruction divided without further difficulty.

I am quite well aware that the necessity will very rarely arise for adopting this expedient. Indeed, this is the only time that I have ever failed in passing a metallic instrument over a whalebone, when once it had been made to find the passage. Possibly in this instance further maneuvering would have enabled me to adhere to former practices. So soon, however, as this expedient suggested itself, and was tried, I found that I saved time and accomplished my purpose more speedily, and, consequently, more easily for the patient, than I had feared was possible. The patient's recovery in this instance was uneventful.