

rate may be reckoned as between the 25th and 61st years. Bushe\* records the death of a man from this affection at the advanced age of 72.

SEX, Desault,† from his observations made during a long term of service at the Hotel Dieu, Paris, states that stricture is much more frequent in women than in men, in the proportion of one to ten. Ashton‡ says that the proportion is about equal in the two sexes. Bushe,§ in his fifteen reported cases, mentions having met with stricture in only eight women. Erichsen|| says that it is met with special frequency in women. Of the thirty-one cases I have collected, twenty occurred in men and only eleven in women; of my own cases, four were men and three women.

#### IV. CAUSES.

Although in some extremely rare cases, stricture of the rectum has been known to come on spontaneously, yet its exciting source, if not direct origin, is found in inflammation in or about the part itself; and this inflammation may be induced by a variety of causes which may be classed as *accidental*, while *others may be more properly considered as local or constitutional*.

Among the *accidental* causes we have the presence of foreign bodies thrust from the exterior, the lodging of some substance, the retention of portions of clothing or other materials in the gut or its immediate neighbourhood, setting up a degree of irritation that leads, sooner or later, to an effusion of serum or coagulable lymph in the coats of the bowel, or in its cellular investment, which becoming more completely and thoroughly organized, induces degeneration and alteration of the tissues, and with this, necessarily, a commensurate degree of contraction of the bowel, which, if unrelieved, will lead to a complete closure of its canal, and the lingering and agonizing death of the patient.

It is a singular fact that this unfortunate result is more to be looked for after some slight injury, such as a fall or blow upon the nates or anal region, than when the injury has been from the first, of a most serious, if not very doubtful nature. Well do I remember seeing in the hands of my venerable and distinguished teacher of surgery, Valentine Mott, of the University of New York, an enormous angular stone, that had been forcibly driven base foremost into the rectum of a drunken fellow, by some equally drunken associates, just for the "fun of the thing," and which remained concealed in its novel situation for some ten days, producing obstinate constipation and its many and varied accompaniments, and had baffled the skill of several eminent medical men. The Professor's advice was requested; he made a close and critical examination,—the patient not being able to give any account himself—and soon discovered the source of the trouble, but did not so soon find the means of dislodging the intruder; and it required all the mechanical and surgical ingenuity with which he is so pre-eminently gifted, to succeed in performing successfully the only operation on record.

\* Op. cit. p. 259.

† Œuvres Chirurgicales, par X. Bichat, vol. 2, p. 422, Paris, 1813.

‡ Op. cit. p. 39.

§ Op. cit. p. 48.

|| Science and Art of Surgery, edited by Brinton, page 759. Philadelphia, 1854.