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HOPITAL NECKER.

OPERATION OF LITHOTOMY. REASONS FOR PREFERRING IT IN THIS CASE TO LITHOTRITY.

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We are about to practise in a few minutes the operation of lithotomy upon a young man under our care, who is at present lying in Bed No. 27, Saint Vincent Ward. But, before doing the operation, I desire to make known to you the reasons which have decided me to choose this mode of treatment for this patient. At the present time, indeed, the operation of cutting is no longer done by surgeons except for certain grave reasons, and it may be said that, in the immense majority of cases, the treatment of stone consists in lithotrity, the efficacy of which you have many times been able to appreciate for yourselves in this service where not a day passes in which it is not practised.

We have to do with a young man 21 years of age, who entered the hospital on the 21st of December last. His history is almost entirely pathological, for since two or three years old he has always suffered more or less in micturition. When 7 years old he even passed some blood, but these emissions of blood were not at all abundant, and have never since reappeared.

From this time up till lately the patient suffered but little, and, according to his own statement, he was, on the whole, tolerably well: playing, running, and entering, without excessive difficulty, into all the exercises of his age. From time to time, however, he experienced in the bladder certain recurrences of the pain making itself felt at the end of micturition. Matters went on thus up to last year, when he began again to suffer, not only during and after micturition but more constantly. The very sharp pains which he experienced were characterized by being considerably aggravated by the slightest movements of the patient, so that not only could he not ride in a carriage or railway train but it became absolutely impossible for him to move about. Along with this his urine was purulent but not alkaline; lastly,

and it was on account of this infirmity that he entered the hospital, this young man presented an incontinence of urine, with which, indeed, he had been affected since his infancy.

On his entrance we found him to be a rather large man, almost completely developed, but thin, pale and debilitated.

In view of his history we were naturally led to proceed immediately to a local examination, and, as is our invariable custom, commenced with an exploration of the rectum. We found the prostate slightly bosselated, but not at all increased in volume; on the part of the vesiculæ seminales nothing particular was presented, the epididymis itself appeared perfectly healthy, so that there was no reason for delaying over the idea of a generalized tuberculization as might at first have been supposed. We then explored the canal of the urethra. As usual this examination was at first made with a soft instrument, that is to say with an *explorateur à tête* with a soft and supple stem, and afterwards with a silver sound.

The former afforded us valuable information: chiefly, it showed us, as is moreover the rule whenever patients suffer from the bladder, that the membranous portion of the urethra was contracted. The passage of the instrument into the prostatic portion was also a little painful, but nevertheless it did not amount to much, and it was only at the moment of entry into the bladder that we gained information of prime importance, for scarcely had the bougie cleared the neck of the bladder when we felt a sensation of a peculiar, raspy grating which was nothing else than the contact of the instrument with the calculus. It should be known, indeed, that soft instruments are perfectly capable of detecting a stone in their path, and of transmitting the sensation of it to the surgeon who is exploring.

We then examined the bladder with a silver sound. The introduction of the instrument was necessarily painful, as is always the case whenever the patients have suffered long. But, although painful, it was done under the simplest conditions, without bleeding, and without consecutive reaction. By this means we soon found the stone, and seeking to ascertain its dimensions, we discovered that it measured 3 to 4