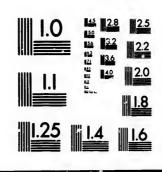


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(A) CASE OF

ABSENCE OF THE LOWER END OF THE RECTUM,

WITH PASSAGE OF FÆCES THROUGH THE PENIS: SUCCESSFUL OPERATION FOR RELIEF.

BY FRANCIS J. SHEPHERD, M.D., C.M.,

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY IN M'GILL UNIVERSITY, SURGEON TO THE MONTREAL
GENERAL HOSPITAL.

Reprinted from the Edinburgh Medical Journal for August 1884.

In the March number of the Edinburgh Journal I notice the report by Dr Wm. Craig of a case of imperforate anus, in which the rectum communicated with the urinary tract. As Dr Craig states in his paper that he is not aware of any similar case to his own having occurred, and Mr Holmes, when speaking of cases where the rectum communicates with the urinary tract, mentions that he knows of no case where the bowel has been reached successfully through a perineal incision, I thought that it might be of interest to place on record a case similar to Dr Craig's, where operative procedures had resulted favourably. On the 16th of November 1883, Dr Molson delivered a woman of a healthy male child after a tedious labour. Next day the mother told him she noticed something strange coming from the child's penis. On examining the

parts Dr Molson immediately recognised the discharge as meconium, and, on further examination, discovered the infant had an imper-The mother having consented to an operation, Dr Molson requested me to take charge of the case. The patient was admitted into my wards at the General Hospital on 19th November, being then three days old, and having since birth passed a large quantity of feculent matter by the penis. The child, which was strong and healthy, had some distention and tenderness of the abdomen, but very slight fulness of the perineum. There was a well-marked median raphé, and a slight puckered depression at the site of the anus. I decided first to try and reach the bowel through the perineum. After placing the child under chloroform, I made a free incision in the median line, dissecting carefully backwards and upwards in the direction of the rectum, and frequently placing my finger in the wound to feel for fulness or fluctuation. I dissected in this way to a depth of fully 2 inches, when discovering a fluctuating tumour, I punetured it with my knife, and was pleased to see quantities of fæces escaping through the wound. I then enlarged the puncture in the bowel, and without much difficulty drew it down to the external wound, and held it there by catgut stitches.

Almost immediately after the operation the mother removed the child from the hospital, and I did not see it again till 9th June 1884. In the meantime Dr Molson had occasionally visited the case, and instructed the mother, in passing bougies, to keep the anus open. The mother, however, did not attend very scrupulously to directions, and after the operation the opening kept gradually growing smaller. When I saw the child last, it was six months old, and was stout and healthy; the opening had contracted so much that it with difficulty admitted a No. 12 catheter. The mother informed me that the child still occasionally passed fæces by the penis, but only when "opening medicine" was given. I intend, when I can get the mother's consent, to incise the opening, and I shall insist on her passing her little finger twice daily through the anus, as Dr Holmes recommends.

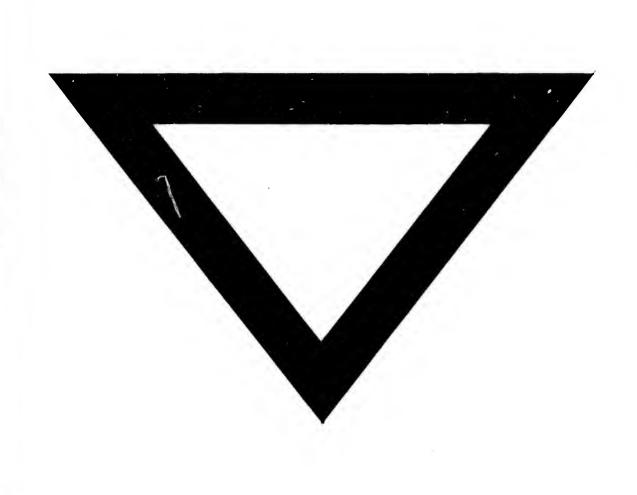
I forgot to mention that the child was the subject of another deformity, viz., absence of the metacarpal bone, and probably the

trapezium of the right thumb. It was the mother's fifth confinement; all the other children were born perfect.

In this case it is highly probable that the rectum opened directly into the membranous portion of the urethra, as, if the connexion was with the bladder, it is not probable the bowel would have been reached by a perincal incision.

Dr Craig remarks in his paper that examining the preparation of his case, it is evident that it was possible to pierce the bowel by a trocar or even a bistoury, but he says, "to have enlarged the opening sufficiently to have cut down upon the rectum would have been an operation such as few newly-born children could have survived, and even if the child could have survived, the want of development of the rectum would have prevented a successful issue in this case."

I cannot agree with Or Craig's conclusions, for, if the bowel is not reached the child will certainly die, and I do not think fear of the severity of the operation should influence the surgeon in his endeavour to reach the bowel; again, as the rectum is pretty movable in the infant it can be brought down, as is shown in my case, even if the lower end is undeveloped.



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