IV.

ON A NEW AND SIMPLE MODE OF
OPERATION FOR NÆVUS.

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THE danger of hæmorrhagy from the excision—the excessive pain of the ligature—and the extensive scar left by vaccination, as these have been respectively employed for the cure of nævus, induced me to consider whether some less objectionable mode of operation in these cases might be devised.

About nine months ago I was afforded the opportunity of examining a case of this kind, and of superintending the operation, by my valued friend, Mr. Heming, of Kentish Town.

This operation consisted in introducing a *couching needle* with cutting edges, at one point of the circumference of the nævus, close by the adjoining healthy skin; from this point the instrument was made to pass through the tumor in eight or ten different directions, so as to produce slight incisions through its textures, parallel with the skin, but not so as to pierce the tumor in any other part. The first point of puncture was made the *centre* of the several rays of slight incisions effected by merely withdrawing, and again pushing forward the little instrument in the manner and in the various directions, just described.

The nævus was oval, and rather larger than a shilling; the couching needle was introduced at one point, passed as nearly as possible to the opposite edge of the tumor, without piercing it, and then in various directions, until eight or nine punctures, or rather incisions, traversing the texture of the tumor, but not the skin, had been made. A little

pressure was then applied over the tumor, by means of strips of adhesive plaster. There was no pain, and of course no hæmorrhagy, and as the skin was only punctured in one point, there could result no scar.

I expected that inflammation would take place, and that a cicatrix would be formed, which from its solid texture and progressive contraction, would obliterate the textures of the tumor.

For some time—for several weeks—little appeared to have been effected. There was little or no change in the appearance of the nævus of any kind. Indeed, it was almost concluded that the plan had failed—that the vitality of the part had been too low to yield the degree of inflammation required for the cure.

What a short time did not effect, however, a longer period accomplished completely. Half a year after the operation the tumor was found to have disappeared, and the color of the skin to be nearly natural: the skin itself was perfectly preserved, and free from any appearance of scar.

To obviate the occurrence of hæmorrhagy, of pain, and of scar, is of sufficient importance, in itself, to attract the attention of surgeons in the treatment of this affection. But, besides this consideration, nævus sometimes occurs in situations, as in the tongue, the eye-lids, &c. not admitting of any other mode of operation. It does not appear that pressure forms any necessary part of the treatment. The cure in the case detailed was gradually effected, long after pressure had ceased to be employed.

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