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XXVI. *Case of Hydrocele, improperly treated as Rupture.*
By JOHN TAUNTON, Esq., Surgeon to the City and
Finsbury Dispensaries, and to the City Truss Society for
the Relief of the Ruptured Poor.

To Mr. Tilloch.

SIR, IT is not the least of the evils which accompany a state of disease among the poorer classes of this large metropolis, that their complaints are frequently misunderstood, and consequently treated in a manner which tends to increase rather than to alleviate their sufferings. The superficial and hasty view which is but too often taken, even by regular medical practitioners, of the diseased victim of poverty on the one hand, and the allurements held out by mercenary and ignorant pretenders to medical skill on the other, are the causes of this additional affliction to the poor.

Those who officiate as medical officers to the numerous public charities which do honour to this great city, have daily opportunities of witnessing the melancholy effects of the errors thus committed. The following case of this kind, which occurred lately under my own inspection, and which had nearly terminated fatally to the patient, is one of the many illustrations of this observation which may be adduced.

Thomas Erskine, æt. 53, servant to Mr. Thomas Butcher, of Charing Cross, a few years ago received a kick in the scrotum, which occasioned a swelling, and which has continued ever since. At first it was attended with extreme pain; but this soon ceased, and the tumour assumed an indurated appearance. The poor man applied to two regular surgeons in his immediate neighbourhood, who informed him that his complaint was a rupture, and recommended a truss. Attracted by an alluring advertisement from some truss-makers in Soho, the patient applied to them: these gentlemen, after examining the patient, and affecting a great deal of medical and anatomical knowledge, confirmed the opinion of the surgeons, and applied a truss to the tumour, for which they charged the exorbitant price of a guinea. This happened three years ago, and the patient has ever since worn the instrument thus applied, with more or less inconvenience. A few weeks ago he was admitted a patient at the City Dispensary, when on examining him I found the case to be a decided hydrocele. The operation of tapping was immediately performed, and the patient in

a few days was restored to his former state of health. Pilulæ rhei cum terebinth. formed the only prescription which I found necessary to administer.

I am, &c.

Greville Street, Hatton-Garden,
August 24, 1810.

JOHN TAUNTON.

XXVII. *Proceedings of Learned Societies.*

ROYAL SOCIETY.

THE experiments detailed in Mr. Davy's paper respecting the muriatic acid, of which we gave a brief report in our last Number, are so highly interesting, that no apology can be necessary for again bringing the subject before our readers, and endeavouring to present the results in a concise yet perspicuous form. But before proceeding to this, we must beg our readers to correct two typographical errors in our last report. In page 71, line 20, for "nine modes," read *nice modes*; and in line 22, for "nine deductions," read *some deductions*.

The conclusions drawn by Mr. Davy from the series of facts with which this valuable paper is enriched, will serve to extend and enlighten the theory of chemistry to even a greater extent than any of the brilliant discoveries formerly made by this indefatigable philosopher. The following are the conclusions to which we allude:—

1st. The oxymuriatic acid is (as far as our knowledge extends) a *simple substance*, which may be classed in the same order of natural bodies as oxygen gas; being determined like oxygen to the positive surface in Voltaic combinations, and like oxygen, combining with inflammable substances, producing heat and light.

2dly. That its combinations with inflammable bodies are analogous to oxides and acids in their properties, and powers of combination, but they differ from them in being for the most part decomposable by water.

3dly. That hydrogen is the basis of the muriatic acid, and oxymuriatic acid its acidifying principle.

4thly. That the compounds of phosphorus, arsenic, tin, &c., with oxymuriatic acid, approach in their nature to acids, and neutralize ammonia and other salifiable bases.

5thly. That the combination of ammonia with phosphorus acidified by oxymuriatic acid is a peculiar compound, having properties like those of an earth, and is not decomposable at an intense red heat.

6thly.