

affixed to its handle, (*fig. 1.*) and a sheath on its blade, having a screw fixed to one end of it, to confine the knife and the sheath together, (*fig. 2.*) By the handle of this screw, the operator's assistant may draw off the sheath from the knife. At the point of the sheath there is a very fine division in its central part, to the extent of a quarter of an inch, in order to prevent the edge of the knife being injured in withdrawing it. While both parts are fixed together, they make a perfectly smooth and uniform instrument, not unlike a curved probe. (*fig. 3.*) This instrument may be introduced into any fistulous orifice that will admit a common probe; and may be easily passed along the cavity with one hand, while its point is received by the fore finger of the other hand thrust into the anus, in those cases where the gut is perforated by the disease. Where it is not perforated, this instrument, by means of the fore finger in its ring, can be very easily pushed through it, as Mr. Pott justly observes may be done in a like situation with the probe-pointed knife. At this stage of the operation, the sheath may be set at liberty in a moment by an assistant; after making a single turn of the screw, he may instantly, by its handle, withdraw the sheath from the knife. The surgeon directly afterwards finishes the operation by dividing the gut, as with the probe-pointed knife.

With this instrument, (made within the last two months by Mr. Evans, in a very neat manner) I have performed the operation much to my satisfaction in five different subjects; the last of whom declares, that the whole operation gave him much less pain than the previous examination of the sinus by the probe.

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*To the Editors of the Medical and Physical Journal.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE following History of a Mal-formation is, I think, worthy of a place in your Journal. In the first place, it is no common mal-formation; it is, on the contrary, as Dr. Baillie remarks, a very uncommon one. (*Morbid Anatomy, page 181.*)

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sphincter; but where this is to be done nearly to the extent of the fore finger, as will be necessary in some cases, a straight knife will, without great care, be apt to cut the operator's finger. It may also be made of any degree of curvature, or with a handle, of any shape or size, instead of the ring.

181) Again, it suggests a very useful caution against trusting implicitly, on all occasions, to the senses. And lastly, it proves, perhaps, that persons of experience may, by that very experience, be liable, in some instances, to draw hasty and false conclusions. You will judge of these reflections; and you will do with them, and with my history, as may, in your opinion, best answer the purposes of your Journal. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your obedient servant,

W. VAUGHAN.

Rochester,

January, 20, 1800.

A few years ago, a child without an *anus* was born at Gillingham, near Rochester; and I was requested to see it. There was indeed no *anus*, nor even the least index of one; but the *feces* were voided from a conical body extending upwards, from under the *symphysis pubis*, and reaching the umbilical region. The child sucked strongly; and the *feces*, in an almost fluid state, were discharged as often as the child cried.

The urine flowed, I observed it twice, from a part concealed by the base of the conical body.

Some pronounced the child a female; and others, thinking it a male, were desirous to make an *anus*.

The child lived only a few days. When the cavity of the *abdomen* was exposed, and the intestines traced as far as the last *vertebra* of the loins, it was found, that the *rectum*, instead of descending along the *os sacrum*, passed immediately into the *vagina*. The prolapsed part, which was the *rectum* inverted, was easily drawn backwards, through the opening, into the *vagina*.

Now, is it not likely at least, that the persons who mistook the protruded intestine for a *penis*, imagined, from their experience of Nature's monstrosities, that the want of a *præputium*, and the presence of a villous coat, were both *lusus naturæ*? If this were not the case, it is hard to account at all for their mistake. This much is, however, certain, not only that the *rectum* was mistaken for a *penis*, but also, that the *labia pudendi* were mistaken for a *scrotum*, into which the *testiculi* had not yet descended. If any attempt to form an *anus* had been made, the disappointment of the operator must have been inconceivable and disgraceful!