marks are intended rather as suggestions, than as established truths, the practical value of which can only be absolutely determined by their being submitted to the test of more extensive experience. The ability of an individual is confined to the power of stating faithfully what he may have watched attentively, within the comparatively narrow circle of his own observation." pp. 162—165.

Thirty interesting cases illustrate Mr Howship's little work, which is rendered still more useful by a good index. We have now only to express our hopes, that this industrious and able surgeon may long be spared to continue his valuable contributions to our profession.

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VI.

Practical Essays on Strictures of the Urethra and Diseases of the Testicles, including Observations on Fistula in Perineal and Hydrocele. Illustrated by numerous Cases and an Engraving; and prefaced with some Remarks on Life and Organization. By Robert Bingham, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Pp. 357. 8vo. London, 1820.

Mr Bingham seems perfectly aware of the limited and exclusive views with which almost every treatise on strictures of the urethra has been written.

We have Sir Everard Home writing at great length for the purpose of enforcing the use of the lunar caustic, and holding almost every other remedy in perfect contempt; we have Mr Whately again condemning the lunar caustic, and holding up the kali purum as exclusively worthy of our adoption; we have lately had Mr Arnot urging the utility of a particular species of tube for distending contracted portions of the urethra, and to these we may now add Mr Bingham on the use of the unguentum hydrargyri fortius, to the commendation of which a considerable portion of his book is devoted. We do not by any means object to this; and when we consider the different circumstances giving rise to strictures, and the different constitutions in which they originate, we are pleased with every attempt to extend our knowledge of the disease and to multiply our sources of relief.

Mr Bingham introduces his work by some prefatory observa-
tions on life and organization, which do not appear to us peculiarly well placed in a practical work on strictures of the urethra. He strenuously opposes the idea that life is the result of organization, and says, that the following statement (which we quote for the benefit of our sceptical readers) has seldom or never failed to convert those infidels whom our author has occasionally met with:

"For life to be the result of organization, it must happen that organization is the cause, and life is the effect of the operation of that cause; but if it can be shewn, that life exists before organization, then it will appear probable that life is the cause and organization the result, for no effect can precede the cause which produces it. The organization of a hybrid animal resembles that of each parent equally: a mule, for instance, in its organization, resembles the horse quite as much as it does the ass, which proves that the parents had an equal share in producing the organization of the mule; and, consequently, no part of its organization could have been perfected before the parents copulated.

"Considering the short time necessary for the male parent to accomplish his part, we cannot believe that any of the organization of the future young is completed during that short period. Such an idea must appear so highly improbable that it would only be a waste of time to dwell upon it. Organization cannot possibly be completed in that short time, and yet of necessity something must be perfected, otherwise no young animal could be produced. The organization of every young animal partakes of the nature of both its parents: it cannot, therefore, be formed before each parent has contributed its share of influence to regulate the organization: it cannot be perfected during the union of the two sexes, but it is perfected afterwards: it follows then, as a necessary conclusion, that the sexual intercourse perfects nothing but the principle of organization, or, in other words, the first germ of the life of the young animal—thus life exists before organization." pp. 7—9.

Mr Bingham next introduces some observations on the constitutional treatment of local diseases, and throughout the whole of his work evinces a most laudable attention to this important subject, prescribing, in almost every case, remedies calculated to obviate morbid affections of the stomach and bowels; for which purpose he seems to hold the blue pill, combined with small doses of castor oil, and other purgatives, in high estimation.

The first four sections of the work are occupied by a description of the various kinds of stricture; the theory, causes, and symptoms of this disease; and, in treating of these topics, we have not remarked any thing peculiarly novel or interesting in our author's views. In the next section we have some very just
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remarks on the different kinds of bougies, the different articles of which they are composed, and the merits which each of them respectively possess.

In his chapter on the mode of introducing bougies into the urethra, Mr Bingham, when speaking of the introduction of inflexible instruments (of course including the common catheter), expresses himself thus:

"Until the point of the curved instrument reaches below the arch of the pubes, it may be introduced either with its concavity or its convexity towards the patient's abdomen; the former is the most simple, and therefore the preferable mode, except it be rendered impracticable by the protuberance of the patient's abdomen.

"The manner of passing the instrument with its convexity towards the patient's body is objectionable, because, when its point has got past the arch of the pubes, it must be turned half round to reverse the position of the other end, and in effecting this turn, if the point be not made the centre of motion, there will be great danger of injuring the urethra. In taking this semicircular sweep, the instrument must be allowed to be loose upon the surgeon's hand, and he must delicately accommodate his hand to its movements as it inclines to approach to or recede from the body whilst he gently carries it round, and then the urethra surrounding it will determine the centre of motion to the point. But if the surgeon exerts the slightest degree of control beyond what has been mentioned, the point of the instrument will never constitute the centre of motion, and he will incur risk of doing mischief great in proportion to his unnecessary interference." pp. 73, 74.

Although these sentiments have long been our own, we are not confident that we could have expressed them more accurately, and we do not, at this moment, recollect any previous author who has expressed them so well. We feel the more interested on this point, because we know that an inference, unfavourable to our own dexterity, was lately drawn, simply in consequence of our introducing the catheter with its concave side towards the abdomen; our patient, indeed, readily admitted that we gave him less uneasiness than his former surgeon, who introduced the instrument in the opposite mode, but the coup de maitre made with the catheter when its point reached the arch of the pubes had caught the gentleman's fancy, and, being a man of the world, he was decidedly of opinion, that whatever mode of proceeding was calculated to impress the patient with the highest opinion of his surgeon's abilities was obviously the best; the same apology might, however, be pleaded for every species of quackery, and, until we have a better reason than this for altering our practice, we shall continue to introduce the catheter with its concave
side towards the abdomen, as we have now done for many years with success.

Mr Bingham next proceeds to treat, in succession, of the cure of strictures by the simple bougie, the argentum nitratum, the kali purum, potassæ subcarbonas, natron exsiccatum, and the unguentum hydrargyri fortius. The merits of the three former have been amply discussed by preceding writers, and the three latter, particularly the unguentum hydrargyri fortius, Mr Bingham has the merit of introducing to our notice. Of the last he says,

"I come now to speak of another useful auxiliary to the bougie, which, so far as I can learn, has never before been employed in the cure of stricture; a remedy from which I have derived very considerable assistance, and which, on that account, I am disposed to recommend strongly: I mean the unguentum hydrargyri fortius." p. 177.

"The manner of applying the unguentum hydrargyri fortius is, to smear it upon the bougie, and pass it through the stricture, where it may be allowed to remain for a longer or shorter period, according as it is wished to exert more or less influence." p. 179.

"If the stricture happens to be impervious to a bougie, the unguentum hydrargyri fortius may be conveyed to it in the end of a flexible gum canula, and pushed from thence by a bougie, as described when speaking of the unguentum argenti nitriti." p. 183.

As we have nothing to offer upon the subject of these remedies from our own experience, we must refer to the work itself, remarking, that so many remedies have now been pointed out for strictures of the urethra, and each represented by its advocate as so abundantly successful, that we feel half inclined to adopt (with the alteration of a single word) the language of the poet:

For modes of cure let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administered is best.

Mr Bingham concludes his work by some observations on Fistula in Perineo, false passages in the Urethra, diseases of the Testicles, Suspensary Bandages, and Hydrocele; on all of which subjects some pertinent remarks are offered, but to these our limits do not permit us particularly to advert.

The numerous cases illustrative of this work appear to be detailed with much candour;—the cures, in general, are not too expeditious, nor in any way miraculous;—and the powers of remedies are plainly stated, without any exaggerated representation of their effects.