

than in persons fully grown. In persons insuring at the more common ages, the influence of selection must of course diminish from year to year, but probably never wholly disappears.

This portion of the work, like the former, has several elegant coloured diagrams.

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ART. XLI.—*A Treatise on Surgery, its Principles and Practice.* By T. HOLMES, M.A. Cantab., Surgeon to St. George's Hospital. pp. xii., 960. Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1876.

As indicated in the preface, this book "is intended to be to some extent an introduction to the more elaborate System of Surgery," of which Mr. Holmes is the editor. It is, therefore, mainly a *résumé* of these excellent monographs from which the author frequently quotes, while, however, he has not servilely followed them. The aim of the author, "to give a plain and practical account of each surgical disease and injury, and of the treatment which is most commonly advisable," has in the main been well accomplished. The student, and the practical surgeon, will find it in general a clear, concise, and practical guide which can be safely trusted, but no subject is treated as fully as would be desired by one who wishes an exhaustive study of any subject. But every such text-book is of value, for it makes a progressive step in some one direction which is sure to be appropriated in all subsequent books. The enormous improvement to be seen on contrasting our present school-books with those of twenty or thirty years ago has not been made by great and sadde leaps, but each book has gained a little on its predecessor in some one point, and the improvement is never lost. Were it only on account of the introduction of several instructive thermographs, this book would deserve especial commendation, for while the thermometer has rendered such excellent service in medicine, it has been too little appreciated by surgeons. American surgeons will also be glad to see that the comparative safety of ether as an anæsthetic is clearly recognized.

"The question of the relative safety of ether and chloroform is being just now anxiously debated. I have no wish to dogmatize on the subject, but I have used ether with great comfort for many years, and have never seen any but the most trivial inconveniences from it. . . . During the same time, I have also employed chloroform perhaps as commonly, and have been so fortunate as to escape any fatal accident from this in my own practice, and, as I have said above, never to see more than one death from it. But I think we can hardly resist the unanimous opinion of the American surgeons, founded on nearly thirty years of extensive experience as to the relative safety of ether, and if so we should only employ chloroform in exceptional cases." (p. 908.)

The most recent operations and apparatuses are generally noticed. Smith's mouth-gag for bloody operations on the mouth, the extirpation of the larynx for cancer (though Billroth is not named in this connection), Levis's use of horse-hair in aneurism, Esmarch's bandage, etc., are incorporated in the work, and good common sense in general marks the judgment that is passed upon them. As an illustration of this good sense, let us quote the following on varicocele:—

"Sir A. Cooper said, with much truth: 'Varicocele should scarcely receive the title of a disease, for it produces in the greater number of cases no pain, no inconvenience, and no diminution of the virile powers.' . . . The number of cases of varicocele which require serious treatment are very few indeed, and any surgeon who operates frequently for varicocele must operate on many

cases which he would have done better to let alone. I do not deny that such operations may be sometimes required under circumstances which I will immediately point out; but the great majority require nothing but a bug trass." (pp. 839-40.)

The operation of Mr. H. Lee (compression between two needles and subcutaneous division of the vein) which he commends, we do not believe to be so simple and so innocuous as the procedure we have always followed of simply passing a loop of silver wire around the vein, twisting it subcutaneously, cutting it off short and allowing it to remain in the scrotum. There is no hemorrhage, the inflammation is slight, and no ill-results follow the retention of the wire.

The theoretical part of the work in general is good, though too little attention is given to pathological anatomy—the basis of all our rational modes of treatment. The doctrine of inflammation as viewed by the modern school of pathologists is unhesitatingly adopted in a very short statement of the main facts on which it is based. He admits the "Sarcomatous Tumours" as an intermediate class between the "innocent" and the "carcinomatous," although he regards this classification as neither good nor likely to be permanent, "but, as it has lately come much into vogue, it seems better for the present to adhere to it." The whole chapter on tumours (pp. 346-376), while it deals very briefly—indeed too briefly—with their pathology, is an excellent practical compend of their clinical characters and treatment. This practical characteristic is seen again in his judgment on Lister's "Antiseptic method." While careful not to commit himself to the germ theory on which it is based, he yet favours the method for the results achieved by it.

Some parts of the work seem decidedly disproportionate in elaboration and importance. Thus, in the chapter on ulcers, twenty different kinds are enumerated in seven pages, while the consideration of the general subject of dislocations is most unsatisfactorily discussed in less than two pages, and the treatment of fracture of the neck of the femur is disposed of in a half page. He is a strong advocate of the, to us, rather antiquated Deault's or Lister's long splint in fractures of the femur, though he alludes to the anterior wire splint and to Buck's apparatus. In the latter, both in the text and the illustration, the counter extension he recommends is by means of a perineal band; this is very rarely needed, if the foot of the bed be raised a few inches. The mechanical contrivances attained by this procedure render it very important.

A number of omissions of some importance should be pointed out, although in a work including the whole field of surgery they are not to be wondered at. Thus, under hemorrhage no allusion is made to Spiers' valuable needle. Sir James Y. Simpson is not named, either in connection with chloroform (the index reference to which is wrong), or with cupressure, nor is the aspirator spoken of in paracentesis pericardii. We were also somewhat surprised to see no allusion to Dr. Marion Sims, in the article on Vaginal Fistulæ, nor to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, either in the chapter on Snake-bites or Nerve-wounds, while, excepting a foot-note of two lines and a half on page 345, the whole results of our late war as embodied in the unrivalled volumes and circulars of the Surgeon General's office, are entirely ignored. Some of the illustrations, especially of pathological specimens, are obscure as drawings, and only moderately good as engravings.

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