

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON FRACTURES AND DISLOCATIONS. By FRANK HASTINGS HAMILTON, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Surgeon to Bellevue Hospital, etc. Sixth American Edition, revised and improved. Illustrated by three hundred and fifty-two wood-cuts. 8vo, pp. 909. Philadelphia, Henry C. Lea's Son & Co., 1880.

This excellent and exhaustive treatise, which is so thoroughly appreciated both at home and abroad as to demand no commendation at our hands, has been enlarged by upwards of one hundred pages, and materially improved by the addition of a chapter on general prognosis, and by a revised chapter on fractures of the patella, the latter of which is a *résumé* of a separate brochure on that subject.

In the chapter on general prognosis Dr. Hamilton earnestly combats the extraordinary and pernicious doctrine of Dr. Sayre in regard to the union of fractures of the long bones without shortening, and shows that his statements are based upon erroneous observations of, as a rule, imperfectly-recorded cases in Bellevue Hospital. Indeed, in view of the unequal length of the bones of both extremities,—a fact which has been fully established by Cox, Hunt, Wight, and Morton,—the measurement of limbs is almost valueless. At page 437 Dr. Sayre is placed in a most unpleasant light by the positive denial by the author that he measured the limbs which Dr. Sayre asserted were cured without shortening.

In the chapter on fractures of the patella we are surprised to find that, among the numerous appliances which are described and depicted for their treatment, there is no notice of the apparatus of Agnew, nor of the modifications of Malgaigne's hooks made by Dr. Levis and Dr. Morton, which have been so successfully employed in this city, and through the use of which bony union has certainly been obtained. Among the earlier papers on the subject, with which Dr. Hamilton should have been familiar, reference may be made to one, with an illustration, contributed by Dr. Levis to the *Medical Times*, May 26, 1877, and to another from the pen of Dr. Morton,

which appeared in the *Medical News and Library* for December, 1879. Our own opinion—and we are sustained in it by many of the best surgeons of this city—is that ordinary appliances interfere with the nutrition of the patella to such a degree that fibrous union alone is to be looked for. With the view to obtain bony union nothing could be better than the improved hooks to which we have alluded.

Among other omissions—and they are inexcusable on the part of an author who has devoted the best years of his life to the preparation and the revision of several editions of a practical treatise—the following may be noted: the failure to give credit or even allude to the procedure of the elder Pancoast for securing the fragments of ununited bones by means of a metallic pin or screw,—an operation which he first performed in 1857, and which is fully described in Gross's *Surgery*; no allusion to Professor Bigelow's sub-periosteal resection and wiring the ends of the bone,—a practice which was attended with ten cures out of eleven cases; no mention of Bryant's test-line in the diagnosis of fracture or shortening of the neck of the femur, or of his treatment of fracture of the thigh in children by vertical extension; no reference to the splints of Levis, Gordon, and Coover for fracture of the lower end of the radius; nor any mention of Allis's diagnostic sign of fracture of the neck of the femur, namely, a relaxed condition of the fascia lata between the crest of the ilium and the great trochanter, nor of that gentleman's investigations in regard to the deformity from fractures involving or approximating the elbow-joint.

Among other shortcomings are an inadequate description of the very useful and readily-applied Bavarian bandage, and the illustration at page 479 showing the application of adhesive plaster for making extension in fractures of the femur. Instead of being carried above the knee, the strips terminate below that articulation. Dislocations of the hyoid bone are not described.

In referring, in his preface, to certain omissions in the treatises of Gurlt and Malgaigne, Dr. Hamilton remarks that they are "defects which might have been easily remedied in later editions if the authors had seen fit to do so." For this reason he can scarcely find fault with the reviewer who directs attention to his own omissions, particularly when such criticism is meant to make him more careful in the preparation of future editions.