

Prognosis and result have been calculated on various systems, and may be hopelessly unreliable. Sometimes, for instance, the cases are too few to warrant generalization. Very many figures are vitiated by too early reporting: patients with cancer, for example, having been followed up for a year or two only.

There are three principal classes of statistics: (1) Reports called together from the literature; (2) The records of individual surgeons; and (3) Studies of hospital cases published by registrars or others. Pickings from the literature are often absolutely misleading, because successes and curiosities have been selected for publication, while failures are unmentioned. The records of individual surgeons are sometimes touched with *coulour de rose*. Hospital figures are the most reliable, but are usually less favourable than the results obtained in private practice, where patients are naturally better able to look after themselves.

Throughout this book, therefore, careful note is taken of the source of the information, and its relative value is taken into account in the summing up. We believe, moreover, it will be found that the figures are so presented that they do not unduly obtrude themselves, or confuse the plain and simple conclusions of the text which accompanies them.

Lastly, this volume is unique: nothing of similar character has appeared before or can compare with it. It therefore possesses a value entirely its own, and one which time will not diminish. Should it find sufficient favour with practitioners for further editions to be called for in the decades to come, the present compilation will yet maintain its position as a register of the progress of the healing art up to the time of its appearance—a date memorable in the world's history as that of the Great War.

It will be for the future to improve upon the end-results of treatment here recorded, which at the time of writing have attained "thus far, but no farther."

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(Editor.)

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