

entire ex'tremity by amputation at the joint, are not only more easy of performance, but also, as a general rule, more likely to turn out successfully than when other joints are thus treated. It can be a matter for doubt no longer as to whether, after the passage of a bullet through the shoulder joint reparation is possible, without other interference by the knife than such as may be necessary for the removal of splintered and detached bone; Mr. Guthrie having given several cases of such recovery; so that we may lay it down as a rule, that in cases where a small amount of splintering has taken place, the limb may be preserved without an operation. The cases are, however, very few indeed when conservative surgery could thus be put to the test; and since the introduction of the Minie bullet, such a class of cases must be fewer than ever, since this missile in its passage through the long bones, or indeed any other structure, lacerates or breaks to pieces the parts with which it comes in contact, much more than did the round ball; its destructive tendencies in this respect being attributable to its more readily assuming a flattened and rugged form, when opposed to any resisting body—Independently of the considerations alluded to, there are others, however, which require notice. For instance, a bullet may have come in contact with the bones entering into the formation of the articulation; the injury apparent may not seem very great and yet be really so, the flattened portions of bone being kept together by the surrounding membranous connections, whilst the subsequent inflammation causes a greater degree of injury in the joint, giving rise to caries, necrosis, and longer continued suppuration, than is the case when the shafts of bones alone have suffered. The amount of prolonged suffering, frequently, as we see in other gunshot fractures, where joints have suffered, extending over a period of years, induced by an attempt to save the limb; the excessive discharge of matter, and the ultimate bad results to the patient's constitution, especially if of scrofulous diathesis, would, in almost every case, demand of us that at the earliest possible period after the receipt of the wound, we should remove the parts injured, either by excision or amputation. That some cases of injury to the bones entering into the shoulder-joint, may and do recover without such interference, I am, however, convinced of, having had a case under my own care in which such a result took place; and reflection on this subject with others has convinced me of the exceeding folly of laying down dogmatical rules to be followed in the treatment of gunshot wounds. Scarcely ever do we meet with two cases alike. The constitutions of men are so different; the effects of climate on different individuals so varied, and the complications from disease—when epidemic influences are so rife as with an army in the field—so many; all these combined contingencies, require a sound judgment, equally, if not more,