

PREFACE

This volume is issued as a companion to the *Index of Treatment* and *Index of Differential Diagnosis* brought out by the same publishers. Its principal aims are :

(1) To set forth the results, and particularly the end-results, of various methods of treatment, in such a form as will enable the practitioner to obtain a fair, unbiassed, reasoned opinion as to the prospects of securing for his patient permanent relief, and the risks of such treatment.

(2) To furnish data by means of which, apart from the question of treatment, one may seek to arrive at an accurate forecast of what will probably happen to the individual patient.

Although the art of prognosis is vitally important—and nearly every intelligent patient, or his friends, will ask for an opinion as to his prospects, and will judge of the capacity of the medical attendant by the accuracy of that opinion—it is extraordinary to find how little help is given by current text-books. Especially is it difficult to find reliable data as to the end-results of treatment, more particularly surgical treatment. Even large monographs on special diseases, though they usually advise certain measures, only express a pious opinion as to the probable results thereof, unsupported by any trustworthy figures.

The compilation of the present *Index* has, therefore, been extremely laborious, because a painstaking search through the wilderness of modern medical literature in several languages has often yielded very small results. The editor has found it necessary to supplement the published records by investigating the end-results of treatment at the Bristol Royal Infirmary—upwards of a thousand patients having been communicated with for this purpose; and other contributors have also taken great trouble to acquire, from their private or hospital practice, the necessary figures.

The only way to express end-results in such a manner as to give authoritative guidance is by quoting statistics. Thus alone can the practitioner, unless his personal experience is far wider than ordinary, verify or qualify the promises of an enthusiastic specialist.