

explain, for it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether the reason for failure lies with the size or condition of the hernia, the patients general health, his age or his conduct after the operation or the kind of operation employed. No operative procedure yet devised will effectually remove the causes of every species of hernia, so that in certain cases a permanent cure is out of the question: nevertheless the radical cure of hernia may be regarded as among the satisfactory operations in surgery. Although the operation has been successfully performed at almost all periods of life, most authors incline to the opinion, that it should not be attempted in childhood, being somewhat more dangerous in these cases, and the prospect of a cure by means of a truss is in most cases to be expected. Should this fail or should it be found impossible to confine the hernia within the abdomen by means of an instrument then the radical operation is to be advised. Irreducible herniæ in adults not advanced in years, and in fact all those cases which cause serious discomfort to the patient, and at the same time are not externally large should be subjected to operation. In reducible herniæ which cause no discomfort and are easily retained in place by a truss, I am disposed to think, as a general rule, the operation should not be urged upon the patient. In all cases of strangulated hernia, when the condition of the intestines permits of return within the abdominal cavity the radical operation should be attempted.

The radical operation is contraindicated in,

(a) All cachectic conditions.

(b) Very large strangulated herniæ.

(c) The aged, where the patient is not likely to survive a prolonged operation under an anæsthetic.

Here the surgeon should content himself with relieving the strangulation.

While on the subject of strangulation I would beg leave for a moment to urge upon the profession the vital principle of early operation in cases of strangulated herniæ. When done early it is comparatively easy and free from danger, but owing to a variety of circumstances the operation is often delayed until too