

CHAPTER IV.

THE IMPERFECTLY DESCENDED AND THE ABNORMALLY DESCENDED TESTIS.

Some Developmental, Anatomical and Pathological Considerations.

THE imperfectly or abnormally descended testicle is a deformity which, though it may not give rise to symptoms during childhood, will almost certainly lead to serious consequences during adult life. The deformity may be unilateral or bilateral, the latter being by far the more serious, on account of the uncertainty as to whether the malposed organs are functional. In either case, however, owing to liability to injury and to attacks of inflammation, it is likely to be the cause of severe disability to a young adult who wishes to lead an ordinary active and vigorous life; on this account it is in ordinary times a bar to those who wish to enter the public services, as well as in many other walks in life. Frequently, too, the deformity is complicated by the presence of a hernia, and in this case the abnormal position of the testicle will have an important bearing upon the treatment of the hernia, operative or otherwise.

The treatment of an undescended testicle is thus a matter of great importance, and I think that it will be generally admitted that the results of the operations commonly employed can scarcely be regarded as satisfactory.

It will be necessary, before discussing the treatment, to briefly consider certain anatomical and pathological points which have a practical bearing upon this. No attempt will be made to go into these matters fully: they will be found adequately described in standard surgical and anatomical textbooks and also in Mr. McAdam Eccles' book on the "Imperfectly Descended Testicle,"* to which I am indebted in many of the remarks which follow.

* "The Imperfectly Descended Testicle," by W. McAdam Eccles. London, 1903.