

the practice of torsion in 1868, and it is interesting to know that it came from an artery that had been ligatured, and that the ligature was carbolized gut. . . . We have now had at Guy's Hospital 200 cases of thigh, leg, arm and forearm amputations, in which all arteries have been twisted, 110 of these have been of the femoral artery, and no case of secondary hemorrhage." It is important to add that torsion still holds out at Guy's for all vessels up to the femoral. The vessel to be secured should be separated from its sheath, and "twisted till resistance is no longer felt." It is needless to add that torsion is practised by other eminent surgeons in all countries to the exclusion of the ligature.

The next important point is accurate coaptation of the edges of the wound. Without this, healing by first intention is impossible, no matter how well other details have been carried out. In amputations, especially, it is necessary to exercise deliberation in constructing the flaps, otherwise proper coaptation may be impossible. The wound being closed, it is covered with an elastic pad of absorbent cotton, which has been impregnated with some disinfectant, and secured by the light pressure of a bandage. A drainage tube should be inserted at the lowest angle, if suppuration is deemed inevitable from the nature of the case. A wound thus treated is almost certain to do well. The main points to be careful about are: cleanliness, disinfection, arrest of hemorrhage, accurate coaptation, and, finally, a light, *dry* dressing. All surgeons insist on the wound being kept dry, for the evident reason that moisture and heat are essential elements in decomposition. A wound properly dressed should not be disturbed for four days, unless absolutely necessary. Needless and meddling interference only serves to retard the healing process.

The admirable results obtained by this mode of treatment, or some modification of it, have in no small degree stimulated and emboldened the surgeons of the present day, and led them to exercise a freedom with joints, the abdomen, and the different organs, never before ventured, and that, too, with the most surprising success. While it belongs to the few to go to these astounding depths and heights, it is the duty and privilege of all who use the scalpel at all to avail themselves of approved methods, even if it be but to close a wound already made or amputate a finger.

POPULAR GULLIBILITY.

It would be natural to suppose that in this age of what is called the universal spread of knowledge, the public generally would be comparatively free from the possibility of being taken in by the ignorant charlatan. Such is, however, unfortunately by no means the case. On the contrary, this very spread of knowledge, by giving rise to new and sensational theories, seems to have a peculiar tendency to mystify and mislead.

We have been lately particularly impressed with this by recent popular expositions of the so-called science of phrenology. Phrenology, every intelligent person knows very well, if it step beyond its legitimate sphere, viz., the observation of the general configuration of the skull, and attempts to dogmatize from supposed protuberances—popularly known as bumps—is simply an absurd hoax. Yet we find persons who go about the country and earn a magnificent livelihood by publicly giving utterance to the most palpable falsehoods concerning these said bumps, and actually asserting that they are able, from them, to read character. For ourselves we see no difference between such men and the common fortune-telling gypsy. Nevertheless, it is impossible to take them to task; if the public are willing to pay their fifty cents to hear how "manhood is analysed and restored;" and five dollars to hear what line of life they should adopt, and what sort of wives and husbands they should marry, we are powerless to blame those who cater to such deplorable ignorance.

Yet there is a remedy. To us, as medical men, this is of no little import. Phrenology, as taught by the class of men to whom we have alluded, is closely allied to branches of learning which come under our special protection. It is our duty to discover means by which to eradicate, or even to make impossible, the spread of these erroneous opinions. There are various ways of doing this. But we must follow the example of these persons to this extent: our exposition of these degraded sciences must be made fully as interesting as theirs. And it is quite possible to do so—indeed, in the hands of a skilful lecturer the charlatan could be held up to merciless and ludicrous criticism. We are glad to see that the press has treated this subject properly. Let us not be behindhand in doing our best to trample down scientific falsehoods of every description.