

which have included both nerves and blood-vessels at the moment of their application, so as to become a source of local irritation, may also have some share in the production of muscular retraction. It is well known that the irritability of the muscular fibre, which, in fact, constitutes retraction, may act so far independent of the nerves as not to be connected with the consciousness of feeling, and that, even in the dead body, it may exist for a considerable time, till at last the organization begins to be dissolved. But it must likewise be confessed, that its inordinate state of action is, to a certain extent, influenced by nervous excitement; for it appears to be increased by the stimulus of inflammation in the extremity of a divided nerve, and accordingly resembles that state of local inflammation which, in its turn, is considerably aggravated by a high grade of symptomatic fever.

By a proper and timely attention to the bandaging of a limb, the retraction of the muscles may often be prevented. The soft