

the assistant in charge to do so. He was convinced that, by and by, fracture of the patella would be generally treated on the plan he described, in order to secure a perfect joint, without risk, under antiseptic precautions.

Mr. Holmes insisted that the operation could only be justified in some old cases, and not in new ones.

Mr. Heath thought that Mr. Lister's paper before the Medical Society might cause the loss of many knees if not of many lives, because it would stimulate country surgeons to repeat his operation under circumstances which rendered antiseptic treatment impossible. In recent cases, Mr. Heath insisted that the operation was both unnecessary and unjustifiable. (Mr. Heath's new method of treating recent fractures of the patella by aspiration is noticed in the *Retrospect* of June, 1882.)

Mr. Bryant read notes of thirty-two cases of fracture of the patella treated in the ordinary manner and collected at random from the Guy's Hospital register by Mr. Poland. The table showed that injured limbs treated in this way after intervals of 15 or 20 years remained perfectly useful as a result of treatment. With such an experience, he thought the risk to life incurred by Mr. Lister's operation could not be justified.

The general opinion then among English surgeons seems to be that the operation is not suitable in recent fractures, and that though Mr. Lister may be very successful, it does not seem that his most ardent disciples are capable of the same success. The operation is only justifiable in cases of old ununited fracture causing a useless limb and then should only be performed with the strictest antiseptic precautions.

Mr. John Wood, of King's College, has lately (*Lancet*, Nov. 17th. 1883,) had a death from septicæmia following the operation for non-union of fractured patella by the Listerian method. Now, when such a careful and skilled surgeon and so able an anatomist as Mr. John Wood has a failure with Listerism, what will happen to surgeons of ordinary ability and much less experience. It seems to me that this case is sufficient to condemn the operation, in recent cases, at all events. Mr. Wood