

It is evident from the above description that the original vice of conformation may produce consequences varying vastly, according to the period of foetal life at which it may originate ; for the earlier its advent the greater will be the changes that may result from it. In some cases it is clearly sufficient not only to change the character of the head of the thigh bone, to alter or totally destroy the cotyloid cavity—but also to compress and deform the bones of the pelvis, so as in after life to produce the most grave and serious consequences, impeding, or totally preventing natural delivery when the accident shall occur in the female—while these changes may also incidentally influence not only the spine, turning it from the perfectly strait and erect position ; but it may also alter the size, shape, and direction of the inferior extremity—impeding its normal development, and presenting it as a lasting deformity. Again: the vice of conformation may be so trifling, that it may not be observable in early life, or influence the due and proper motions of the hip-joint, until some slight accident develope the deformity—produces dislocation of the femur ; and, were we ignorant of the facts which we have here presented to our readers, we might be sorely puzzled to find displacement of the powerful hip-joint occurring from so trifling a cause, that we should feel inclined to doubt the evidence of our senses, and might be misled in our diagnosis in consequence.

Should the head of the femur be removed from the cotyloid cavity at an early period of foetal life, from any deficiency in the coxo-femoral articulation, the thigh-bone may rest in every variety of position upon the bones of the pelvis ; when the trochanter major alone remains, it may form a false joint with the bones of the pelvis, and here often a mere sulcus or depression marks its position. We may now find the cotyloid cavity completely filled up and entirely obliterated, while the complicated action of the muscles at this early period, from the false position of the bones, mould the pelvis into a great variety of forms. We find some of these muscles, according to the position of the bones, inordinately developed ; hence their power or form from such causes ; some may be found greatly reduced in size, or perhaps totally obliterated. Thus, we find causes in themselves at first of the most simple character, producing great and powerful effects ; these operating upon the soft and pliant skeleton, while yet scarcely more than cartilage, they will produce effects more or less extensive according to the cause that shall produce or influence these deranged actions. We should remember that these causes may operate upon one articulation only, or influence