

Editorials.

The Treatment of Angular Curvature by Forced Extension.

THE revival of the method of treating Pott's curvature by immediate reduction of the deformity bids fair to giving rise to some lively discussion. Before any positive opinion can be expressed, it will be necessary to watch for many months the results obtained in the cases now being reported. Angular curvature is a slowly progressing disease; and in the cases that recover under treatment by rest, jackets and supports, the cure is a slow one. It is safe to say that the ultimate results of the present treatment by forced extension must also be revealed very gradually.

Calot, of Berck-sur-Mer, in France, has been mainly instrumental in bringing the operation to the notice of surgeons. Rébard, of Paris, has been also very active in his advocacy of the treatment. Tubby and Jones in Britain, and Brun, Maltherbe, Bilhaout, Hoffe and others have reported cases. Calot states that of six hundred cases so treated, paralysis has occurred in three instances. Against this he claims that it must be remembered that this complication occurs once in every five cases. No other procedure has yielded better results.

With regard to the class of cases upon which the operation ought to be performed all these surgeons appear to be agreed to classify Pott's curvature into three grades. First: those without ankylosis, and in that condition where the kyphosis can be readily reduced: second, those cases in children of fairly good health, with moderate curvature, and not too firm ankylosis. This latter class of cases are suitable for immediate extension. Children suffering with cachexia, cough, fistulæ, abscess, and persons over twenty or twenty-five years are not good subjects for treatment by this method.

Calot in his treatment of these cases makes use of extension to the amount of 80 kilogrammes, or about 150lbs. This might appear as a very heavy strain to place upon these cases, yet Calot declares that he has gone higher than this and employed 100 kilogrammes in one case. In some cases with any firm adhesions and where extension and pressure upon the boss fails to reduce the deformity, he resorts to laminectomy. By this means the curvature can be reduced. This operation