

ART. XXXIV.—Observations on Anchylosis. By William Hales Hingston, M.D., L.R.C.S.E., Member of the German Society of Naturalists and Physicians, &c.

In the September number of the Chronicle, when speaking, under the head "Medical Institutions of Berlin," of the Clinique in Ziegel Strasse, I alluded, *en passant*, to Langenbeck's heroic method of treating anchylosis generally. As the article in that number had already occupied more room than originally intended, or was consistent either with the comfort of its readers, or the intentions of its conductors, I merely mentioned the peculiarity of treatment, with the intention of returning to the subject on another occasion.

It has often been to me a matter of surprise, that a mode of treatment so effectual, and at the same time so safe, should be almost exclusively confined to the city in which it was first practised. During a residence in Berlin of nearly five months, I had an opportunity of witnessing the operation repeatedly, and the result was invariably favorable. On visiting the land of experimental surgery—France—I was informed by those on whose authority I could rely, that after Louvrier's miserable failures, the boldest surgeon would not feel warranted in interfering with an anchylosed limb.

I have not seen any similar treatment in British hospitals; and if the opinion of some of the teachers of surgery in the *Haupt Stadt* of things medical, Edinburgh, be taken as an index, the practice is unknown in Britain. I may, therefore, reasonably conclude, that interference with an anchylosed joint is not practised on this part of the continent, where surgeons and physicians seek for precedents, and wisely, too, in the annals of British medical literature. This, I trust, will be a sufficient excuse for the remarks that I may offer.

Anchylosis, in the words of Cooper, denotes an intimate union of two bones, which were naturally connected by a natural kind of joint. It is divided into *true* and *false*, according as the motion is totally or partially lost. "In the *true*, the bones grow together so completely, that not the smallest degree of motion can take place, and the case is positively incurable."* "Where the joint is perfectly immoveable, little can be done for the patient."† "In all cases anchylosis should be most warily interfered with; for it may be regarded as a compromise between health and disease; an imperfect cure, yet both a saving of the part, and a cessation of morbid action, the rash infringement of which is most likely to be visited by untoward consequences."‡ "No attempt should ever be made to cure, although every possible attempt should often be made to prevent a true anchylosis."§ "The exertion to prevent is not always proper, for

* Cooper.

† Hooper.

‡ Miller.

§ Cooper.