

quack—will indicate the difference between science and chance—while it will certainly proclaim to the world that even in the study of surgery the old and long established proverb above alluded to, is not without its application.

CONGENITAL DISLOCATION OF THE HIP-JOINT.

That dislocation of the hip-joint may occasionally happen prior to birth, is a fact clearly established; and that it happens subsequently to that period, from causes which have previously happened to the fœtus when within the uterus, is no less certain. Congenital dislocation is always dependent upon insufficient development of the coxo-femoral articulation, or malformation of the bones of the pelvis; it may proceed from an immense variety in the character and grades of these congenital defects, each of the component structures of the part being occasionally the direct or indirect cause of the accident. Among the vast variety of these conditions, we find that the head of the femur may be deficient, it may be smaller than natural, or it may be flattened before or behind, according to the direction of the limb—so, also, the neck of the femur may be diminished both in length and in thickness, while but a rudiment of these parts may sometimes be present, or even these may be entirely absent, so that the upper end of the femur terminates with the trochanter major. The cotyloid cavity may be increased in depth, reduced to a slight depression, or completely defaced. Again, it may be large in size, in proportion, to the head of the femur—the cartilage covering the different surfaces of the articulation may be more or less deficient. The round ligament may be morbidly short, inordinately increased in length, or completely absent. The capsular ligament may be extremely lax and greatly increased in size in every direction—or it may be morbidly contracted and greatly thickened. We may also find that the muscles around the joint undergo changes incompatible with their normal condition—they may be simply discoloured—be transformed into a yellow tissue of a fatty appearance, or be entirely wanting. When congenital dislocation is connected with deformity of the pelvis, we find a lateral compression of the sides, and a corresponding increase of the antero-posterior diameter, or these conditions may be completely reversed. The tuberosities of the ischium may be deformed, so as considerably to change the outlet of the pelvis, while the bones may suffer from this disturbing influence, so as greatly to derange all the dimensions of its cavity.