

not only ineffective and painful, but even dangerous by increasing the existing, or by reproducing the original morbid condition that gave rise to the contraction. We remember the case of a middle-aged gentleman who suffered from paraplegia, in the course of which the extensor muscles of both feet became to such a degree contracted that the feet appeared to be in the same axis with the legs. The disease had existed for some eighteen months, when gradual improvement became noticeable in colour, temperature, sensation, and motion. At the end of the third year the operation for the deformity was deemed practicable, from which it was hoped that the patient might be enabled with the aid of crutches to move about. But he refused the administration of chloroform. After the Achilles tendon had been divided, a rather powerful effort was made to flex the foot. The attempt not only failed, but gave rise to *terrific pain*. The division of the tibialis posticus and peroneus longus muscles had to be deferred by request of the patient. During the ensuing night electric discharges commenced from the spinal chord downward, which continued in increasing severity some weeks, when inflammation of the chord supervened terminating fatally in a few days. The use of anaesthetics might probably have averted the eventual reproduction of the original lesion; but nevertheless the case proves all we intend to show, namely first, that even a powerful extension does not overcome spastic contraction of long standing and great intensity; and secondly, that such an attempt is fraught with imminent danger. Similar experience has been made in reflected contractions attending joint diseases. In those cases we have seen articular affections reproduced that had terminated years previously, by merely placing contracted muscles in forcible extension, notwithstanding the use of chloroform. The ensuing inflammations were characterized by extraordinary violence and rapid development. In the face of such facts, it would seem that the suggestions of the author must be taken *cum grano salis*, and be set down as unsafe practice.

(To be Continued.)

---

A *Practical Treatise on Fractures and Dislocations*. By FRANK HASTINGS HAMILTON, A.M., M.D., Professor of the Principles of Surgery, Military Surgery and Hygiene, Bellevue Hospital Medical College, Surgeon to Bellevue Hospital, and to the Charity Hospital, New York, &c., &c., &c. Third edition, revised and improved. Illustrated with two hundred and ninety-four woodcuts; Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1866.

This work has been received as a standard authority on the subject of Fractures and Dislocations. Perhaps no treatise gives greater evidence of