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LACERATION OR RELAXATION OF
PERINEUM AND PELVIC FLOOR.

BY HOLFORD WALKER, M.D.

IN choosing the above subject, I am induced to do so in order to enter a protest against the article on the subject in vol. ii. of the "American System of Gynæcology," lately issued to the profession. For the author of the article I have much personal regard, and pleasant memories of his operative work during my sojourn in Philadelphia two years ago; but cannot on that account refrain from condemning what I consider the most flagrant omission on his part, in not recording and endeavoring to give a description of the simplest, shortest, and best means of remedying the condition that has yet been discovered. I say simplest, because any practitioner can perform it with the greatest ease; shortest, because two minutes suffice to complete the operation; and best, because the results are as good as those of any other method, and, in case of failure (although I have yet to see an instance), there is no loss of tissue. I refer to Lawson Tait's operation, descriptions of which have appeared from time to time in the various journals. Although I admit the great difficulty of performing any of these operations merely from descriptions given by those who have witnessed them; but if difficult to grasp the ideas, from a written description of this most simple of

operations, what must it be to form any idea of say Standes' operation on page 760 of the work to which I have referred! Those who have attempted to perform Emmet's from the author's description, and have witnessed it as performed by the author himself, have been thunder-struck at the wide difference between description and practice. That Howard Kelly was ignorant of the great advantage of Tait's operation over that of others, I cannot for one moment conceive. What then is the cause of the omission? I sincerely trust that no personal reason would permit an author of a paper to so far forget the duty he owes to the editors and profession at large as to withhold subject matter from his article to which the subscribers to the work are justly entitled. The work in question was intended, and is doubtless looked upon by the profession at large, as being authority, and the best at that, on the various subjects on which it treats. What then, may I ask, would be its value if all the other articles were as far behind the day in information as the one to which I have referred?

From the hitherto complicated procedures and descriptions for the performance of the operation the profession at large have been loath to urge their patient to undergo it. Where even the practitioner has screwed up his own courage to the necessary point, he then encounters a greater difficulty in persuading the patient to submit to an operation that is likely to last an hour to an hour and a half, with a good average probability of greater or less failure. The pa-