

comprehended by the practitioner, they may without doubt be severally employed with advantage in some of the various kinds of accidents to which this part is liable.

The intentions required to be fulfilled in the treatment of fracture of the neck of the thigh-bone, is to place the divided portions in apposition, and if possible to keep them so until union may have taken place. The cause that impedes this intention is commonly the action of the muscles inserted into the various fractured portions. These actions and effects we have already endeavored to explain, while considering the nature and character of the symptoms present in each variety of these accidents; so that it now remains but for us to consider the means whereby we may most conveniently and effectually accomplish this indication. In all these cases the cause of retraction of the several fractured portions is by the action of the muscles inserted into them. This is obviously permitted by the solution of continuity of the firm osseous structure intended permanently to keep their origin and insertions at a normal distance. When this extensile power ceases to operate, as a matter of course, the least action of the muscular fibres have a tendency abnormally to approximate the fractured portions, and to cause distortion of the limb. In many of these cases the condition of inordinate nervous sensibility, which the injury causing the fracture has produced in the muscular apparatus, cause the different muscles influencing the fractured portions to act inordinably, which upon the least exciting cause is suddenly augmented, producing spasms—so that the state of rest which we desire to produce in the part is far less easily accomplished in one case, than in another. Again, doubtless the direction and character of the force producing the injury will, by the irregular action and great irritation which it produces in certain muscles, develop different amounts of nervous irritability in each, producing in some greater capacity for rest than in others. Thus, when the fractured neck of the thigh-bone is caused by force which proceeds from above downwards, the generality of muscles do not participate very greatly in the injury—consequently the limb is far more tolerant of rest; but when the fracture happens in consequence of force proceeding from without inwards, the injury and irritation to the muscles is usually so great that the nervous irritability is vastly exalted—spasms being constantly present. These facts, therefore, must obviously have considerable influence in the treatment of the case, and in our opinion, should direct the mode of the employment of the extending force. Then again, the general tone of the nervous system,