

that it is highly improper, particularly from the inflammation and suppuration which must inevitably follow and destroy the patient. He, on the contrary, recommends rest and other means calculated to preserve, if possible, the life of the patient.

In cases of this nature, a difficult question presents itself to the surgeon. Is he to risk the danger of a formidable operation rather than allow the patient to live without the use of half of his body? Experience must here decide. Sir Astley himself acknowledges that he did not succeed to effect a cure in any of the cases where he operated, and that all the benefit he derived from it was, he suspects, a temporary alleviation. It is a well known fact, and we have had opportunities of ascertaining it in some cases which occurred in our own practice, that patients will generally recover in such case, but remain paralytic all life. But let us enquire what Mr. Bell says on the subject of fracture of the neck of the thigh.

He is decidedly in favour of Sir Astley Cooper's assertion on this point, but claims it as belonging to his brother who explained, "that in fracture within the joint, the capsule is distended with fluid, and the bone does not unite; but that, on the contrary, union takes place when there is more extensive injury and bloody effusion. He (Mr. T. Bell), knew also, and quotes a variety of authors to prove that the lameness of old women is from fracture of the thigh bone."

The following are the reasons assigned by Mr. Bell for the want of union: if the bone be broken within this capsule, it is attended with an increase of colourless effusion into the joint, and the bones remain loose and subject to motion. But if the bone be broken external to the joint, the cellular connexions are torn, and there is bloody effusion; there follows this:—inflammation and consolidation of the surrounding parts; the bones are sustained by this mass of inflamed matter; and in due time bone is formed in it, and that bone constitutes the medium of reunion."

He further says that, as it is impossible to decide whether the fracture is such as will unite or not, union is to be attempted by proper means, but if it appears that after six weeks there is no reunion, nor such stiffness and swelling as forbade it, we must let the parts fall out of use and waste.

We shall also notice one accident which Mr. Bell says has not been understood by his brother, nor by Sir Astley;