

was looked upon as doomed. And when Lizars, of Edinburgh, first operated in Great Britain, he was assailed by a certain amount of ridicule. I need not say to you that it is now one of the established operations, and for one of such magnitude marvellously successful, with a mortality of less than thirty-five per cent.

The experience of the practical surgeon teaches him to rely upon the powers of nature, and that it is his duty to assist and oftentimes to guide her; in other words, he is the pilot who can steer the ship, but who cannot make the wind blow. Knowing the wonderful assistance that nature will afford him, it is his boast that, in the present day, he can treat diseases without operative interference, where formerly the knife was considered indispensable; that he can substitute minor operations for more severe ones; that he can often save limbs by the removal of diseased joints, where years ago amputation was deemed inevitable; for example I need only mention excision of the hip, knee, ankle, shoulder, elbow and wrist joints, to prove the wonderful benefits of conservative surgery of late years. Removal of the ends of the bones in compound dislocations and fractures, instead of the limb, are examples of modern conservative surgery. I may also mention the treatment of aneurism by compression, acupressure, flexion, manipulation, galvanico-puncture, &c.

Improvements in individual operations have taken place, as in amputations, in the operation for hernia, that of removing cartilaginous bodies from the knee-joint, that of opening the canal from the inferior punctum, so as to obtain room for the passage of probes large enough to remove the obstruction in fistula lachrymalis, instead of styles permanently retained.

Acupressure, a new mode of restraining hæmorrhage, as recommended by Professor Simpson, is well worthy of practical application by the surgeon, for by experience alone, its value can be tested; it has its advocates and its opponents, so had the discovery of John Hunter; and who can say that it may not, at some future day, supersede the use of the ligature.

The most brilliant discovery in modern medicine, and one of the greatest boons ever conferred upon mankind, is the power the surgeon possesses of wrapping the patient in a painless sleep, while he is subjected to the horrors of the operating table. Yet, while accepting immunity from suffering, the patient incurs a certain amount of risk—statistics having proved that death has resulted from anæsthæsia, regardless of the agent used, once in between 2,000 and 2,500 cases. The mortality is small, but let us hope that a substance may yet be discovered that will produce the effect required with impunity. Local anæsthæsia, by freezing the part, is of modern origin, and is suitable for minor operations.