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PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH AMERICAN EDITION.

IN preparing this edition for the press, the Author has made a careful study of the most recent contributions to the literature of fractures and dislocations as found in the various American and foreign medical journals, and in the latest surgical treatises; including the excellent treatise on fractures lately published by his distinguished friend, Dr. Lewis A. Stimson, of New York: but for most of the additional matter contained in the present edition he must acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. A. Poincot, Professor Agrégé of Medicine of Bordeaux, and Surgeon to the Hospital, who, as translator and editor of the French edition of this treatise published in 1884 by Baillière & Sons, of Paris, has brought together a large number of more lately recorded facts and observations relating to this subject, and has added valuable suggestions of his own. These contributions the Author has utilized in the present edition, and has added many observations drawn from his own more recent personal experience. The result has been a considerable enlargement of the size of the volume, and, as he trusts the reader will find, a proportionate increase in its practical value.

Some apology or explanation may be due to many of the writers on these subjects who have been occupied, especially of late, in experiments upon the cadaver, for the purpose of determining the nature, causes, mechanism, and treatment of fractures in the vicinity of joints, and of dislocations, in that he has not, generally, attached to them the same degree of importance which the experimenters seem to have claimed for them.

There can be no doubt that most of these experiments furnish

valuable information, which it would be unwise to reject; but it is equally beyond doubt that the results thus obtained cannot be accepted as illustrating precisely what usually occurs in traumatism inflicted upon the living body, while the muscles retain their normal activity. In the case of fractures, the rigidity of the muscles is always a factor of great importance in determining the seat and character of the lesion, and in some cases it is the sole factor. In the case of dislocations the same is true, only in a much greater degree. A large proportion of traumatic dislocations are determined in their nature, direction, and extent by the violent, and often spasmodic, action of the muscles acting in connection with the direction and force of the external violence. Some are dependent solely upon the action of the muscles. It is also the sole determining cause in all idiopathic, spontaneous, or pathological dislocations. In neither fractures nor dislocations made upon the cadaver can this action be imitated or supplemented.

On the other hand, clinical observations alone cannot always be relied upon to settle a disputed point in the mechanism and nature of a traumatism belonging to the classes of which we are speaking, and especially when the question relates to a lesion involving a joint; and this partly because of the difficulty of making a diagnosis while the seat of lesion is covered with soft and sensitive tissues, partly because of the fallibility of the testimony furnished by the patients themselves, and partly because of the fact that the reliability of the surgeon as an expert who has reported the case is not always established, and the report has not, therefore, any more value than common "hearsay."

Finally, nothing is more unreliable than the testimony furnished by cabinet specimens whose clinical history is wholly unknown; and in reference to which, in many cases, it is impossible to say whether their present condition was due to traumatism before or after death, or, indeed, whether it was not due to some long preëxisting pathological cause. The fact that by different students these specimens are often interpreted differently, is suf-

ficient to justify the statement we have made as to their occasional worthlessness as testimony.

From the beginning of his studies, the Author has found one of his most difficult labors in attempting to eliminate from the branch of science which he has undertaken to teach, the numerous "false facts," or unreliable statements derived from these several sources; and this must be accepted as his apology for his repeated expressions of scepticism in reference to testimony, some of which has been accepted, as is believed without sufficient examination, by writers whose opinions might be regarded as of more value than his own.

The Author wishes to express his obligations to Dr. Lucien Damainville, for much valuable assistance rendered in the preparation of this edition.

FRANK H. HAMILTON.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE English language does not at this moment contain a single complete treatise on Fractures and Dislocations. The two small volumes of Desault, and the one of Boyer, issued near the close of the last century, and translated into English early in this, may perhaps properly enough have been regarded as complete treatises at the time of their publication, but they certainly cannot be so considered now. The several chapters on "Diseases and Injuries of the Bones," contained in the *Leçons Orales* of Dupuytren, translated in 1846, and the *Treatise on Fractures in the Vicinity of the Joints, and on Certain Forms of Accidental and Congenital Dislocations*, by Robert Smith, are invaluable monographs, but neither of them claims to be anything more than a collection of occasional and miscellaneous papers. The writings of Amesbury and of Lonsdale relate only to fractures. Even the justly celebrated quarto of Sir Astley Cooper is no more than what its title plainly declares it to be, *A Treatise on Dislocations and on Fractures of the Joints*; but since the announcement of the present volume, a translation of Malgaigne's great and crowning work on Fractures and Dislocations has been commenced by Dr. Packard, of Philadelphia, and the first volume has been placed in the hands of the American profession. Should the remaining volume be rendered into English, the gap in our literature will be measurably filled.

Under these circumstances I might scarcely have thought it worth while to continue my labors, already so near their completion, had it not seemed to me that Malgaigne, whose researches have been truly marvellous, had failed in some measure to give a

just representation of the observations and improvements which have been made from time to time by my own countrymen.

The contributions of American surgeons to this department had to be sought chiefly in medical journals, many of which have long been discontinued, and most of which were inaccessible to the great French writer. Even to an American, the labor of exhumation from archives hitherto almost unexplored has not been small; and it is probable that many valuable papers have been overlooked; indeed it is impossible that it should be otherwise.

I am free to say, also, that I have been encouraged by a hope that my own personal experience, obtained during many years of public and private service, might be of some value to my contemporaries.

Very little space has been devoted to what is now only historical, except so far as was necessary to correct certain time-consecrated errors, or to confirm and illustrate the practice of the present day; but by a pretty full report of characteristic examples, selected from more than one thousand cases already published by myself, by copious references to the examples recorded by others, and by a careful exclusion of whatever has not been confirmed by experience or established by dissection, I have endeavored to make this treatise useful both to the student and practical man, and a reliable exponent of the present state of our art upon those subjects of which it treats.

In order to render the description of the various forms of apparatus employed in the treatment of fractures more intelligible, and to avoid the necessity of lengthened explanations, a large number of illustrations have been introduced, more, perhaps, than might be thought necessary, especially as in several instances the apparel which is figured is not that which is recommended by the author. It is believed, however, that by a study of the principal forms of approved dressings the reader will be better prepared for the exigencies of practice; and that by the simultaneous presentation of those which are not approved, he will be saved from a wasteful expenditure of his time in the con-

trivance of useless apparatus. It is not in the discovery and multiplication of mechanical expedients that the surgeon of this day declares his superiority, so much as in the skilful and judicious employment of those which are already invented.

The author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to very many of his professional brethren, throughout the United States, for the promptness with which they have responded from time to time to his inquiries, and for the generosity with which they have opened their pathological collections and placed valuable specimens at his disposal.

He wishes also to express his special obligations to Dr. J. R. Lothrop, of this city, who has kindly aided him in revising most of the proof-sheets as they have been issued from the press.

FRANK H. HAMILTON.

BUFFALO, N. Y., December, 1859.