same as that of Montpellier or Marseilles, we see a statement so contrary to the experience of living men and women as to proclaim loudly the want of some other means for ascertaining the effects of climates besides those hitherto in use. It is under the conviction that this mode of observation supplies the defect that it is submitted to the medical profession as most immediately suited for their purposes.

The apparatus is so simple, the method of using it so easy, and its results so exactly accordant with the effects produced on the sensible surface of the human body, that by it the one instrument seems to present us with an epitome of all that we want to know from all the instruments now used in meteorology: hence, then, long as this proposal has been neglected, I cannot refrain from attributing it to the imperfect manner in which it has been brought forward; and I still hope that, sooner or later, it may attract the notice of those who shall have the opportunities of testing its utility and practical importance.

**ART. X.—On the Statistics of the Mortality of Fractures of the Skull; Effects of Operation, &c., &c.**

By HENRY MURNEY, M.D., Surgeon to Belfast General Hospital; President Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society; formerly Demonstrator of Anatomy Queen's College, &c., &c.

I have frequently noticed there is a tendency to class all fractures of the skull together, and to look upon the patient's prospect as little short of hopeless. Serious as the mortality is, I did not think an examination of statistics would show so many sufferers rescued from death.

I would here observe that, as a rule, I look with great caution on statistical tables, knowing how frequently cases are classed together because of some trifling point of resemblance, although they may differ in most important particulars; and also, that it is much more likely a man would publish a successful than a fatal case, not that any desire to mislead or give a false idea of the mortality of a disease might exist; but when, from the serious character of the affection, it was expected the tendency would be to death, a sense of

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satisfaction, perhaps a lurking one of pride, that, contrary to all anticipations, recovery ensued, might tempt him to place on record that which probably he would not have done if the prognosis had been verified. Grave objections, no doubt; but, on the other hand, I may say, for some time past, our Medical Journals have contained records of all the most serious cases, with operations performed, in the London and principal Provincial Hospitals in England, we are thus likely to obtain an account of all unsuccessful as well as successful cases, and will be enabled to approximate the mortality of many injuries not yet precisely defined. I would add my belief that, from the fatal character of fractures of the skull, surgeons hesitate less about the publication of the cases than in many other affections requiring interference. These reasons I consider are sufficient to warrant a greater degree of confidence than is usually reposed in statistical tables, and I make use of them as giving by figures an approach to the mortality, effects of operation, &c., &c., and some other particulars in this class of affection.

I have records of several cases of fractures of the head which have come under my notice, I shall take the liberty of referring to a few of them where I find they illustrate portions of the subject. My information is not so accurate on some points as I could wish: for instance, in fracture of the base, the reporter frequently mentions that fact without specifying the part of the skull involved; and in injury of the superior region of the head, the calvaria is named without specifying the bone or bones injured.

I have taken a period of 10 years, from 1851 to 1860, inclusive, and have tabulated the cases of fractures of the skull to the number of 253, which appear in the following Journals:—Times and Gazette; Lancet; Dublin Medical Press; Dublin Hospital Gazette; Edinburgh Monthly Journal; Dublin Quarterly; Guy's Hospital Reports; and the Trans. Belfast Clin. & Path. Soc. I have also examined Braithwaite's Retrospect, and the British and Foreign Medico Chirurgical Review. I had not access to other Journals. Twenty-five cases were treated by practitioners not attached to public institutions; all the others were contributed by the attendants on the large metropolitan and provincial institutions, or by medical officers in the public service.

Of course I shall follow the usual division of the subject, viz.:—Fractures involving the calvaria or lateral parts of the head, and fractures of the base; and first of the former:—In addition to cases I have treated myself, I have the particulars of 187. In 84 of these