It is the duty of an editor of a work such as the present to accept the responsibility for disappointments and delays and to hold his tongue. As, however, in the case of the second volume, which was sadly delayed by the tardiness of the Vaccination Commission, so perhaps the delay of the present volume may be attributed to causes beyond the control of editor or contributor. An article by Professor Welch on "Thrombosis and Embolism" was to have been in my hands in ample time for the publication of this volume last Christmas. With this exception the volume was ready for press some weeks before that season, and an explanation is due not only to our readers, but also to the several authors whose work was thus long before its appearance put beyond the possibility of revision. Unhappily, before the completion of his task, Professor Welch found himself committed to a desperate fight for the freedom of physiological research in the United States. As President of the Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons, the duty fell upon him of organising the profession in opposition to a bill, now before Congress, charged with restrictions so vexatious that all enlightened medical and scientific men in America consider that its enactment would be nothing less than a calamity. In addition to his laboratory and lecturing work Dr. Welch had to write innumerable letters, prepare papers and documents, organise committees, visit Washington repeatedly, and have interviews with senators. He is unkind enough to add that "all this trouble comes from England, where, if your
scientific men had made any sort of courageous stand twenty years ago I should not have been sacrificing my time and energies in this way. I am disposed to think that the trouble I have caused you is a judgment for the delinquencies of your countrymen in this matter." Such are the uncertainties in the course of political business, that although Professor Welch expected every week that the matter would come to the vote, and thus liberate him to fulfil his obligations to me, yet week after week he has been disappointed, and compelled to keep up agitation and organisation. Even yet the fate of the bill is not sealed. Had Professor Welch foreseen this grievous delay he would have withdrawn from his engagement in time for me to place the article in the hands of another contributor. This story I have ventured to tell at some length because it contains an interest and perhaps a warning for us all.

I have now altered the order of the articles, and postponed Diseases of the Arteries to the following volume, at some sacrifice of the natural order of the subjects. Professor Welch's article is one the readers of the System would not willingly forgo; I trust, therefore, it will soon come into my hands, and enable me to produce the sixth volume, in other parts ready for press, before midsummer. Dr. Rolleston has been good enough to give me the advantage of his assistance and advice as heretofore, an advantage which, I trust, he will continue to me till this work is finished.

Dr. Mackintosh of Clapham has sent to me the list of errata in the third volume which is printed upon another page of this one; for this kindness I trust that in a sincere and chastened spirit I am duly thankful to him.

THE EDITOR.

CAMBRIDGE, March 1898.