

Messina are showing the heroism and devotion wherever the danger is greatest, and the need the sorest, which we have learnt to expect, and never in vain, from the members of this Service in case of emergency. His Majesty the King has sent an expression of his high appreciation and approbation to the Fleet at Messina for the energy and gallantry they have displayed in dealing with the disaster in Italy and Sicily.

One more message must be noted. Signor Chimirri, the leading Calabrian Deputy, "strongly deprecated sending any useless mouths to Messina or Reggio. Trained nurses only are wanted."

### Medical Matters.

#### APPENDICOSTOMY FOR CONSTIPATION.

Mr. C. B. Keetley, F.R.C.S., in an interesting address, delivered before the surgical section of the Royal Society of Medicine, on "Why and How the Surgeon Should Attempt to Preserve the Appendix Vermiformis," emphasises its value in the surgical treatment of constipation. He said, as reported in the *Lancet*:—

"Appendicostomy is, I believe, the best surgical treatment for constipation that has yet been devised. So far it has proved with me unfailling. One or two of the most obstinate cases of constipation I have met with or read of have yielded to it at once. And in the cases in which I have not done the appendicostomy for constipation, but in which the latter trouble has existed or occasionally complicated the course of the case, the injection of diluted aperients, especially saline sulphates and carbonates or cascara, has speedily given relief. Often the mere injection of warm water through the appendix has sufficed.

"An interesting and very important question is: Will the subject of an appendicostomy for constipation have to use his appendix for the rest of his life in order to maintain regular action of the bowels? I must write with reserve on this point, because it is not yet even four years since the first appendicostomy was performed for constipation. It has not been necessary to increase the strength of the purgative solutions through the appendix. On the contrary, it has generally been possible to diminish it. And sometimes it has been found that plain warm water in sufficient quantities ultimately sufficed. But progress in this respect has been slow.

"I believe that a subject of constipation, if intelligent and willing to obey rules as to diet

and exercise, even if it were found necessary and advisable to do an appendicostomy, would, after that operation, have a better chance of being completely cured by an experienced physician than before. Strictly speaking, appendicostomy is not in itself a remedy for constipation, but an operation which facilitates the employment of remedies. One thing which an appendicostomy cannot help doing is to bring home to the subject the enormous value of taking enough water into the alimentary canal and taking it at proper times. It can be further used to teach the lesson of the advantage of not drinking copiously at meals. Many people dilate the stomach, indirectly irritate the pylorus, and ultimately bring about constipation through taking much beer or whisky-and-soda at meals. They imagine that the food protects them from injury by alcohol. Really, their copious draughts at lunch and dinner aggravate the ill-effects of their ill-chosen and excessive food."

#### THE MICRO-ORGANISMS OF INTESTINAL PUTREFACTION.

At a recent meeting of the French Academy of Sciences, says the *Journal of Practical Dietetics and Bacterio-Therapeutics*, Professor Metchnikoff joined issue with certain bacteriologists who assert that intestinal putrefaction possesses no pathological importance, because the *Bacillus putrificus*, which is the principal organism concerned, is never present in the human intestine. He stated that, with the assistance of Mr. Yungano, he had isolated from the fæces of healthy individuals a bacillus, "drum-stick shape," mobile, with spores, which thrives in milk without causing it to coagulate, and digests the casein, these constituting the characteristic qualities of the *B. putrificus*. More frequently, however, he found two other members of the putrefactive family, the *B. aerogenes*, first described by Welch and Nuttall, and a mobile organism which he believes to be identical with the *B. sporogenes* described by Klein, so that the human intestine may contain at least three species of putrefactive organisms. These organisms elaborate toxins, which pass through porcelain filters and resist a temperature of 100 degrees C., and the toxin of *B. aerogenes* proved fatal to rabbits. Inoculation of the *B. aerogenes*, moreover, determined appendicitis in a chimpanzee. Professor Metchnikoff adds that these are not the only organisms concerned in putrefactive changes, for if a mixture of hashed meat in water be inoculated with faecal matter, other species develop and yield filtrates vastly more toxic than when only the three species in question are concerned.

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