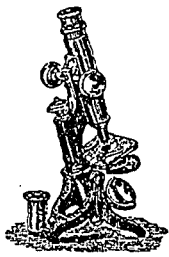


Medical Matters.

ABDOMINAL OPERATIONS.



It is well known what immense strides have been made within the last few years, both in the technique, and in the successful results, of abdominal surgery. Operations are now attempted, and in many cases successfully performed, which, fifteen years ago, would have been considered most dangerous, and, thirty years ago, would have been thought impossible. A good illustration of this is given in the following case recently described in a German medical periodical. The patient had two large pelvic cysts removed, one being a dermoid, and also an enlarged and carcinomatous right ovary. In extirpating the latter, it was found that there were very close adhesions to the surrounding parts, and it was therefore necessary, in order to remove the mass, to take away also a small portion of the bladder, and about three inches of the wall of the large intestine above the sigmoid flexure. The tear in the bladder was closed by a double row of stitches, and a plastic operation was performed between the small, and the rent in the large, intestine. The patient recovered from the operation, but soon afterwards exhibited symptoms of obstruction from blocking of the colon. It was thought that if aperients were given, or even if enemata were used, the newly-joined wounds in the bowels would be broken through, and, therefore, an artificial anus was made in the ascending colon. A few weeks later the intestinal junction having become firm, and the canal quite permeable, the latter opening in the colon was closed successfully and the patient then made a complete recovery. The case not only illustrates the difficulties which have often to be encountered in the removal of pelvic tumours, but the successful and great advances which, within the last few years, have been made in the treatment of such dangerous complications.

MEGRIM.

A new remedy is proposed for the treatment of this troublesome complaint, in the shape of full doses of extract of ergot, combined with cinchona. The dose is repeated after an hour if the headache persists, and again an hour later if necessary, and it is asserted that in severe and old standing cases, in which all other remedies have failed, this treatment has given prompt relief. There can be little doubt that the symptoms of the complaint are largely dependent not only upon hepatic and intes-

tinal derangements, but also upon disturbance of the cerebral circulation. It would almost appear, if the treatment to which we have referred proves to be generally successful in these cases, that the vascular condition is the chief cause, for the effect of the ergot clearly would be to contract the vessels, and thus to diminish, for the time, the blood current in the brain.

MEAT PEPTONES.

A German contemporary recently published some valuable results derived from sphygmographic tracings from patients who were being fed exclusively on meat peptones. The effect upon the heart muscle appears to be very marked and very similar to that of digitalis. The nutrition of the body generally was improved, the appetite enhanced, there was increased kidney action, and in other ways the bodily health was considerably benefitted. It would appear to us that the influence of this form of nourishment upon the heart was probably, therefore, secondary to its effect upon the nutrition of the body, and was, indeed, rather indirect than—as our contemporary infers—the action of a direct heart tonic. Whatever the precise course of events, however, the main point, and the only practical one, is to note the effect of meat peptones as a valuable tonic in enfeeblement from disease.

WALNUT LEAVES.

In the treatment of disease, more, perhaps, than in anything else, the "whirligig of time brings in his revenges." Nearly a thousand years ago weakly children were given infusion of walnut leaves to drink. After a time, the advances of science led to the disuse of this as of many other preparations on the ground that they were "old wives' drugs." But quite recently the ancient remedy has come again into favour, and, curiously enough, for the same class of cases as that for which it was employed centuries ago. A Russian physician, after five years' observations, strongly recommends that scrofulous children should drink an infusion of walnut leaves, and that they should be given from half a cupful even up to a jugful of this, night and morning; it being also used externally in the form of local washes or general baths. No notice is made of a fact, however, which used to be considered to militate against the use of this preparation, namely, the effect which the tea had upon the intestines, causing, as a rule, considerable constipation. There can be little doubt, however, from the extreme favour in which the remedy was held in ages long gone by, that the Russian observer is probably completely justified in his recommendation of its extensive use.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)