

Findings from a Nurse's Notebook.

APERIENTS.

In administering aperients the following facts should be borne in mind:—

The intestinal movements are worm-like. One part of the canal contracts after another, so as to force the food onwards. Aperients act in two ways.

- (1) They stimulate this vermicular motion.
- (2) They cause a large flow of fluid to take place from the blood into the alimentary tract.

Aperients should be taken fasting, because it is obvious that the emptier the canal is the more the medicine can come in contact with its walls, and so produce the above phenomena.

VOMITED MATTER.

Vomited matter is in many instances typical of certain conditions:—

(1) *Fæcal* or stercoraceous, meaning intestinal obstruction.

(2) *Green*.—(a) *Olive green*. Bilious.
(b) *Bright emerald green*. Characteristic of peritonitis.

(3) *Black*.—When blood has either been swallowed as in fractured base of skull, or when blood is poured into the stomach. This occurs in gastric ulcer and cirrhosis of liver.

(4) *Coffee Ground*, (5) *Yeasty*.—These two are seen in cancer of the pylorus. The coffee ground condition is due to the presence of blood which has changed its colour by remaining long in the stomach. The yeasty (frothy) condition means long churning and mixing up. Both are signs of obstruction.

CONSTANT VOMITING.

In cases of constant vomiting, nourishment is usually administered in one of two ways:—

(1) The patient is fed entirely by means of nutrient enemata and suppositories.

(2) The patient is fed entirely by the administration of very small quantities of liquid nourishment very frequently (*e.g.*, $\mathfrak{z}\text{i}$. every half hour); or both methods may be combined.

EMPHYSEMA.

The dilatation and coalescence of contiguous air vesicles.

Disease = a partial suspension, diminution, increase, or alteration of any kind in some function or functions.

Recovery = restoration of the functions to the normal type.

Death = cessation of all functions.

Constant pressure produces atrophy.

Intermittent pressure produces hypertrophy.

THROMBOSIS.

The formation of a coagulum or blood clot in a vessel during life.

(1) The lumen of the vessel is first narrowed. *Concentric* or incomplete thrombosis.

(2) The lumen of the vessel is blocked. *Obstructive* thrombosis.

Thrombosis occurs oftenest in veins.

Embolism = a thrombus swept into a vessel from a distance. Generally situated at the bifurcation of an artery.

INFLAMMATION OF THE RESPIRATORY TRACT IS

(1) Simple. (2) Specific.

Simple.—(a) in the nose called catarrh.

(b) in larynx called laryngitis.

(c) in trachea called tracheitis.

(d) in bronchi called bronchitis.

In all these situations there are common characteristics. Stuffiness in nose and hoarseness, due to swelling of inflamed mucous membrane; or exudation from the inflamed surface, running from the nose; coughing up phlegm.

In laryngitis sometimes the exudation forms a membrane. Then called membranous laryngitis, or croup.

A *specific* inflammation is diphtheria. Due to a definite germ. Membrane forms on the pharynx or fauces, and spreads down the larynx and trachea. Sometimes the bronchi, and even their most minute branches become involved.

THE DANGERS ARISING FROM LARGE BURNS ARE:—

(1) The skin is so highly sensitive that its destruction causes great shock to the patient.

(2) The skin is unable to perform its work as an organ of excretion; more work devolves upon the kidneys than they are able to perform, poisonous gases are retained in the body, and blood poisoning may ensue.

(3) A large suppurating surface is left which may cause death—(1) by the drain on the constitution or (2) by the absorption of decomposing matter.

GANGRENE.

Gangrene = mortification, or death, of a part *en masse*.

Ulceration = death of tissue in little bits.

Gangrene is produced by obstruction to the circulation, *e.g.*, in surgical cases by

(1) Tight bandages.

(2) Rupture of artery (in bad fracture).

(3) Pressure of tumour or fractured bone on artery.

(4) Disease of arteries themselves.

(5) Direct severe injury to limb.

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