


Medical Matters.**THE RETENTION OF A STITCH.**


In the *Indian Medical Record* of November 8th, 1899, Mr. James R. Wallace details a case of a fistula resulting from a retained stitch. The patient, a lady, aged 28, married, three children, had had Whitehead's operation for piles performed in London three months previously. Three weeks after the operation, a painful swelling appeared at the anus, which proved to be an abscess, and was incised. A month later, another abscess appeared, which was also incised. This wound did not heal, and continued to discharge daily. Soon afterwards, she left England. During the voyage, she suffered a great deal of pain, and as there was a soft excrescence at the site of the unhealed wound, she sought the advice of the ship's surgeon, who told her that he considered that she was suffering from cancer. When seen by Mr. Wallace, a fungating mass, with a narrow pedicle, was found to be attached to the margin of an external opening of a fistula situated about a quarter of an inch from the anal margin. This opening communicated by cartilaginous-like cord with a point in the rectum about an inch and a half from the anal aperture. The growth was hard, nodulated, and very vascular, and presented the appearance of an epithelioma. Considering the healthy condition of the patient, Mr. Wallace took the view that the growth was a polypoidal condition of hypergranulation tissue, and admitted her into the Home Hospital, Calcutta. Under the influence of chloroform anæsthesia, the pedicle of the growth was tied with catgut and the mass snipped off with a pair of scissors above the ligature. A director was then passed along the fistulous track, the point entering the bowel at an opening nearly an inch and a half from the anus. The intervening track was laid open, and when the director was withdrawn a horse-hair stitch was found upon it, which fully accounted for the cause and the course of the patient's suffering. The patient left the Hospital a fortnight later, quite well.

THE GRAPE CURE.

This method of treatment has been recently very strongly recommended for cases of dyspepsia, especially when accompanied by constipation and in the gouty. It is also valuable in chronic diarrhoea of dysenteric origin, and a

story is told of a regiment of soldiers decimated by dysentery which vanished in a marvellous manner on encamping among vineyards full of ripe grapes. Chronic cystitis is benefited by the alkaline carbonates developed by the vegetable acids of the fruit, but in such cases care must be taken that the grapes are not sour. Cardiac affections are relieved by the laxative and diuretic action, while almost all patients are benefited by the fresh air, exercise, and early rising which the rules of the "cure" involve. Grapes grown on volcanic soil are said to have a more markedly stimulant and diuretic action than others. Patients are advised to take as much as they possibly can without exciting disgust.

DRUNKARDS' CHILDREN.

A very valuable article was published last year, and quoted in the *British Medical Journal*, concerning the influence of drunken mothers upon the health of their offspring.

Among the many interesting points which the inquiry brought out were the following: The death rate among the infants of the inebriate mothers was nearly two and a half times that amongst the infants of sober women of the same stock. In the alcoholic family there is a decrease of vitality in the successive children; for instance, in one family the three first-born children were healthy, the fourth was of defective intelligence, the fifth was an epileptic idiot, the sixth was deadborn, and the seventh pregnancy ended in an abortion. There was a sensibly higher death-rate in cases where the maternal inebriety was developed at an early period. Sober paternity had little influence, and in face of maternal drunkenness might be almost neglected as far as the vitality of the offspring is concerned. Conception in drunkenness had a distinct influence, as was shown by the fact that in the seven cases in which the condition was noted, in six the children died in convulsions in the first months of life, and in the seventh case the infant was stillborn. On the other hand, imprisonment during pregnancy, if the imprisonment began early in the pregnancy and lasted nearly all the time, seemed to diminish the evil effects; but the difficulties in drawing conclusions regarding this point were great. Of the children of drunken mothers that survived beyond their infancy, 4.1 per cent. (a very high percentage) became epileptic (9 out of 219). These results show the danger to the community of the female drunkard.

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