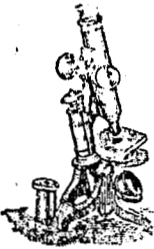


Medical Matters.

EFFECT OF REST UPON SEPTIC INFECTION.



In an interesting article in *American Medicine*, Dr. A. J. Ochsner says that although it is generally theoretically admitted that absolute rest is a most important part of the treatment of septic infections, he has observed that in practice this condition of rest is but rarely secured, and but seldom systematically striven for, except in the treatment of inflamed joints. He reviews the history of fifty-two cases of infection of the hand treated in hospital and extending over three years. In all these fifty-two cases there was not a single death, although many of the patients were brought to the hospital in a very septic condition, with high temperature and pulse and frequently delirious. All those who came under treatment before incisions had been made recovered without deformity or stiffness of the fingers. The treatment consisted in obtaining as nearly as possible perfect rest for the extremity, by placing the patient in bed, applying a large dressing composed of sterile gauze and absorbent cotton saturated with a mild antiseptic solution, the solution employed most commonly being hot saturated solution of boric acid, to which one-third, by volume, of strong commercial alcohol had been added. The whole dressing was covered with oiled silk or rubber cloth. Even in cases in which only the end of a finger was involved the entire arm to the shoulder was included in the dressing, making motion of the extremity almost impossible. The author says that although the hot, moist antiseptic dressings are probably beneficial in themselves, he is positive that the enforced rest is of equal value. In proof of this he observed frequently that an examination accompanied with much manipulation would invariably result in an increase in the affection, and that unnecessary movements during the changing of dressings would result in the same increase in the septic conditions. What is true in the case of infection of a finger-tip is also true of infection of any other part, and the same principle obtains in acute peritonitis resulting from infection from the vermiform appendix, the Fallopian tube, the gall-bladder, or an ulcer of the stomach. During the war in South Africa the surgeons found

that in penetrating wounds of the abdomen, if the patient were wounded while hungry and no food were given by mouth, quite a large proportion recovered, while of those in whom the alimentary canal was not kept absolutely at rest none recovered. The writer concludes his paper by saying that many other instances of this principle can be mentioned, such as the result of strapping in the treatment of mastitis during the beginning of the attack, the use of the splint or plaster-of-Paris casts in inflamed joints, strapping of the chest with rubber adhesive straps in pleurisy, or bandaging the eyes in conjunctivitis; in short, that absolute rest should be the corner-stone in the treatment of all forms of inflammatory conditions in any part of the body.

NEW CURE FOR TUMOURS.

Dr. Wyeth, a well-known New York physician, announces the discovery of a new method of treating tumours by injecting boiling water into them. During an experience of two years some wonderful cures are said to have been effected, and not a single accident has occurred.

In his operations Dr. Wyeth employs a syringe with a metal cylinder and adjustable piston, with needles of varying size, using ordinary aseptic preparations.

The water, which is taken directly from a cauldron and injected into the tumour, is heated to a temperature of 190° to 212° Fahr. or higher. During the treatment the patient is kept under narcotics.

Dr. Wyeth will make a long report on his treatment to the American Medical Association next May.

SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX ESTO.

Signor Guido Baccelli, the Italian Minister of Agriculture, is bringing before the Chamber a Bill, the aim and object of which is to improve the malaria-swept Agro Romano. A Bill with this object was passed in 1883, but has not proved satisfactory.

The proposals contained in the new Bill include encouragement by the Government of individual endeavour by exemption for ten years from the land tax, the application of expropriation to those proprietors of land who do not utilise hydraulic and agrarian methods laid down by law, and the establishment of penal settlements in malarial districts, with the object of improving expropriated lands.

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