

Medical Matters.

A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.



Dr. R. Stockman and Dr. F. J. Charteris state in the *Medical Annual* that one of the most interesting recent discoveries in remedies was the result of an accident. To ear-mark the vintage of a certain year a small quantity of phenol-pt halein was added to the wine under the belief that it was an inert substance. When the wine was put on the market complaints began to be made that it acted as a purgative. The action of phenol-pt halein was then more carefully investigated, and now, under the name of purgen, it is used as an innocuous purgative.

TREATMENT OF RENAL CALCULUS.

Die Therapie der Gegenwart, August, 1904, contains an article by Dr. J. Klempem, "The Treatment of Renal Calculus."

The author asks whether it is possible to dissolve by means of drugs an already formed calculus.

This is another way of inquiring whether the quality of the urine can be so altered that the fluid becomes capable of dissolving a concretion. Many think that this goal can be attained by the use of alkaline waters, while clinical evidence points to the conclusion that calculi large enough to cause symptoms of renal colic cannot by any internal treatment be got rid of.

As the author points out, whether small concretions, which cause hardly any symptoms, can be dissolved by altering the constitution of the urine is a question incapable of solution by clinical observation.

The author thinks, on experimental grounds, that very small concretions, those which form the starting-point of primary calculi, may be dissolved by the systematic employment of alkaline waters. Further, it is possible that larger concretions may be favourably influenced. It must not be forgotten that the conditions attending the formation of calculi in the passages are not the same as those under which experimental tests are conducted.

But in the treatment of these cases hygienic measures and treatment in sanatoria are not to be neglected. Exercise is an important measure, and so is the consumption of a sufficiency of fluid. Of course, when a stone is already present in the kidney, rest is of great

importance. The author calls special attention to the inadvisability of employing aperient drugs, whose tendency is to cause a flow of fluid into the intestine, and which thus divert fluid from the kidney. And treatment at Kissingen, at Carlsbad, at Marienbad, &c., may be of much service.

GOUT AND OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL DISEASES IN RELATION TO SKIN AFFECTIONS.

Writing on skin diseases in the *Medical Times*, Dr. Alfred Eddowes says it is hoped that the valuable contributions to the discussion on the Pathological Chemistry of Gout which took place at Oxford this year, together with the numerous, and learned contributions on the relation of constitutional diseases (to put it briefly) to skin affections which took place during the recent International Dermatological Congress, held in Berlin, will help us on towards the solution of that great puzzle—the pathology, the chemistry, and the actual cause of gout. He goes on to say:—As I maintained while demonstrating sections of "skin-gout" in Berlin, the deposit of colloid *blobs* or egg-shaped accumulations of biurate of soda containing the well-known bundles of biurate crystals is only the climax of the gouty process. Our great aim in further investigation is to discover what it is probably in the blood which causes the kidneys to excrete uric acid. My preparations show that sebaceous glands can, to their own destruction, secrete a hyaline substance in which the colloid, crystal-containing bodies are formed like so many eggs of different age and size. The hyaline material lies everywhere in contact with the cyst-like gland wall, and, while distending the gland, in the end destroys it and forces its way to the surface of the skin. This is one way in which tophi are formed.

Treatment of skin-gout suggested by the above: 1. To encourage excretion by skin and so throw less work on kidneys. 2. To correct pyrosis and other forms of indigestion and constipation which unmistakably cripple the kidneys and skin—the latter damage being obvious through the state of horny layer, nails, and hair. Three valuable aids to the first object are drinking plenty of water, warmth, and suitable massage.

Dr. Haig believes that gout and rheumatism are the same disease, which is not constitutional, but due to poisoning with such articles of diet as flesh and tea, and that they can be cured by leaving off the poisonous foods.

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