

## Medical Matters.

### RECENT SURGERY.

In his last lecture on "Recent Surgery," at Guy's Hospital, Mr. E. C. Hughes reviewed the various cures for cancer that had been tried during the last few years. He first gave a description of the different kinds of cancer of the breast, and showed why the disease was so baffling and difficult to cure, and also why the many so-called cures proved futile. Many attempts, he said, had been made to cure cancer on medical lines, but they had all fallen into abeyance, except the caustic treatment, which would always be used by the ignorant quack.

Cancer cures were also being prepared in the laboratory. Doyen had prepared a serum by repeatedly injecting cultures of the *Micrococcus Neoformans* (which he and others thought was the responsible organism of cancer) into animals, and subsequently drawing off the blood. He obtained results which he claimed as satisfactory, but the method has fallen into abeyance, as it was shown to be useless. Other experimenters used a vaccine consisting of measured doses of the killed cultures of the *Micrococcus Neoformans*, which they supposed to be the cause, but this method, too, has been given up as of no avail.

The most promising of the bacterial methods is that of Coley's fluid, and some of the results are wonderful. Coley injects sterilised unfiltered cultures of the *Streptococcus* of Erysipelas mixed with *Bacillus Prodigiosus*. Great care must be taken in giving the fluid, so as to prevent chill. The average duration of treatment in successful cases was about two to three months, but the fluid had been given for long periods, 2½ to 4 years, without doing any harm.

Save in cases of rodent ulcer, X rays had proved very disappointing, the treatment being only local; it does not in any way affect the secondary deposits in parts of the body other than that under exposure. It is impossible to administer a sufficiently strong exposure to modify growths in the viscera without injury to the skin, but in cases where the disease is superficial treatment by X rays almost always relieves pain, retards growth, and produces retrogressive changes, and enables many patients to resume their everyday life.

Radium has also been tried, and Abbe has achieved wonderful successes with it, but he has unlimited quantities at his command. When it is possible to use it in grammes instead of millegrammes, a great advance may take place in its usefulness.

The High Frequency apparatus has been used during the last few years, and the treatment is known as Fulguration. The patient is put under an anæsthetic, and the electric spark applied for a period of 5 to 40 minutes, after which the cancerous growth is removed, and the wound is again exposed to the spark for about 5 to 15 minutes to kill any remaining cancer cells. At the time of operation and after, cases seem satisfactory, yet later the cancer again occurs. It is found to be of no use when the cancer has reached inaccessible parts. It is, however, a useful method, as it makes the patients more comfortable for the time being, the absence of pain when compared with the extreme pain after an extensive cutting operation, is very marked.

The Lecturer also gave a short description of the Opsonic Treatment, which has been so much in use since 1906.

### ZYMOTIC ENTERITIS.

The second lecture in the course of "Lectures on Babies," which is being delivered by Dr. Ralph Vincent at the Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, was on Zymotic Enteritis and the condition under which the disease arises.

He said that this was the most fatal disease of infancy, and, despite the advances which sanitation has made, no corresponding improvement is observable in the infant mortality rates. On the contrary, epidemic diarrhœa (the official name of the disease), is steadily increasing as a factor in the causation of deaths among infants under one year of age. Diarrhœa which formerly caused the death of 10 per cent. of the infants who die has increased in half a century to 15 per cent.

There has been a vast improvement in their general environment, but the problem of infant mortality still remains, because of the increase of these diseases—prematurity, pneumonia, and diarrhœa.

The increase in the proportion of deaths from respiratory diseases is probably closely connected with the increase in diarrhœa. Healthy infants are not very frequently attacked by serious disease of the lung as a primary affection. Infants most liable to suffer from zymotic enteritis in its most fatal form are those in whom alimentary disorders have been established for some time. The disease is so fatal, that it is of greater moment to consider the methods by which it may be prevented, than its cure. For with the most expert treatment the recovery of the infant is really dependent on the dose of poison received, the precise virulence of the poison, and the vigour of the infant.

It is in no sense an infectious disease, and

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