

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT IS JAUNDICE? IN WHAT WAY DO THE URINE AND FÆCES IN THIS COMPLAINT DIFFER FROM THE NORMAL? DESCRIBE THE AFTER TREATMENT OF A PATIENT WHO HAS HAD THE OPERATION OF CHOLECYSTOTOMY PERFORMED.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Henrietta Ballard, Garrett Anderson Hospital, Euston Road, N.W.1.

PRIZE PAPER.

JAUNDICE.

Jaundice, or icterus, is an affection of the liver characterised by a staining of the skin and mucous membrane by bile pigment in the blood circulation, and is due to the absorption of bile by the blood. Foreign bodies, stones, faecal matter, or inflammatory conditions and growths, or abnormally thick bile, cause an obstruction in its passage from the liver to the duodenum.

The urine in jaundice is a dark brown or greenish colour; the colour varies with the amount of bile, and in fatal cases may be almost black.

The stools are pasty, whitish, clay coloured, owing to the absence of bile and incomplete absorption of fats, and are offensive.

CHOLECYSTOTOMY.

Cholecystotomy is the operation performed to make an opening into the gall bladder and remove obstruction, or for draining in inflammatory conditions. After the operation a fairly long drainage tube is inserted into the gall bladder, and a vessel, such as a medicine bottle $\frac{3}{4}$ iv, or baby's feeding-bottle, sterilised and containing about $\frac{3}{4}$ ii of antiseptic lotion, is arranged so that the free end of drainage tube will remain in same without causing any pressure or slipping out of place. The bile usually does not flow for some hours after the operation. There may be much shock after this operation. Get patient in warm bed as quickly as possible, and rectal saline or other injections may be necessary. Have patient in Fowler's position. Flatus and distension may be causing much discomfort, and may be relieved by the passing of a rectal tube or by turpentine enema. Watch temperature and pulse; record one hour after operation, and then four-hourly. Do not give anything by mouth for at least twelve hours, and it is best to ask surgeon as to his method of feeding these cases.

The mouth may be rinsed out with lemon or soda water.

Watch the urine passed; measure and save specimen, and if retention is present and urine cannot be passed normally in twelve hours, pass a catheter.

Calomel may be ordered on the second day, and an enema if necessary, and a specimen of stool must be saved for inspection.

The drainage tube may be removed or just changed the second day, and stitches are usually left about ten days. Hæmorrhage and sepsis must be watched for, especially the former, which might come from very small vessels and yet have fatal results, either by flowing outside or by the formation of hæmatoma inside.

Vomiting may be troublesome, but usually passes off. Support wound with the hand if patient vomits, coughs, or has hiccough; the latter is a serious condition in abdominal cases, and must be immediately reported to the surgeon.

Drugs may be ordered, especially in nervous subjects, in the form of sedatives, as sleep is a great healer in these people.

The patient should not be disturbed more than necessary on the first day, but after may be well washed daily as ordinary abdominal cases, but much care must be taken to avoid chills; extra clothing, &c., must not be dispensed with at once, and a delicate patient is better wearing a cotton-wool jacket than risking chest complications.

Absolute rest is essential, and visitors must not be allowed until surgeon's permission is obtained. Comfort is the one thing a patient appreciates most. See that patient has pillows arranged to keep him well up and not pushing him forward; a bolster under the flexed knees tied to head of bed and a pillow under each elbow will often prevent the tiresome cramps which occur. Bedsores must be guarded against, and an air-ring used.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. James, Miss P. Thomson, Miss J. Robinson.

Miss M. James writes:—"In obstructed jaundice the bile is chiefly eliminated by the kidneys, the action of which should be assisted by copious draughts of warm liquids, by wearing warm clothing, and taking Turkish baths."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How does water become contaminated? What diseases may follow the drinking of impure water? Mention the principal methods by which water may be purified.

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