

Memoranda :

MEDICAL, SURGICAL, OBSTETRICAL.

DIAGNOSIS OF INCIPIENT ACUTE APPENDICITIS.

APART from the general desirability of making an early and accurate diagnosis, it became a matter of military necessity in 1917 and 1918 to avoid operation in non-urgent conditions other than wound casualties. The problem had become more acute in the summer and autumn of 1918, owing to the influx of cases of epidemic influenza of the abdominal type, which, in the early stages, presented signs simulating appendicitis. In the course of many observations in a general hospital of the British Expeditionary Force, I came to rely on a sign which I believe to be unequivocal; if present, operation is unavoidable.

This sign is observed, of course, only in the earliest stage: the patient complains of abdominal pain, particularly referred to the epigastrium; he looks ill and is generally vomiting; the decubitus is dorsal. Examination of the abdomen reveals, in the upper left epigastric region, skin hyperaesthesia and intense tenderness, with tonicidity of the left half of the uppermost segment of the left rectus abdominis muscle. On the contrary, there is no tenderness nor muscle rigidity over the right iliac fossa. Three or four hours later, there is a commencement of slight pain, tenderness and rigidity in the region usually described, if one elects to wait so long.

On opening the abdomen one finds a process of great omentum approaching, applied to, or actually wrapped around, an acutely inflamed appendix, according to the time which has elapsed since the appearance of the epigastric distress. On account of this phenomenon I have been accustomed to speak of the epigastric syndrome as the "collision-mat sign"—a naval analogy, the omentum being applied to the threatened perforation much as a collision mat is placed over a leak in a warship's hull.

Whether or not this sign occurs in every case of acute appendicitis I cannot say, but I am persuaded that it does become manifest in every case calling for early operation, which, after all, is the practical point. Furthermore, in cases where operation for one reason or another had been delayed until gangrene of the appendix had set in, a history of nausea and vomiting, together with epigastric pain, was generally elicited.

As to the etiology, I formed at first a rough working hypothesis that sickness and pain were due to the drag on the stomach produced by the rapid migration of the great omentum into the right iliac fossa, but it is much more probable that these symptoms are to be explained by pain referred along the great omentum to the stomach in virtue of the development of the great omentum from the primitive mesogaster.

This sign is seldom, if ever, to be noted in patients admitted to a civil hospital, since admission is rarely sought in the earliest stage; its utility, therefore, is that it assists the usual medical attendant to recognize, at the very beginning, a case of acute appendicitis which will certainly call for operative measures, and that as speedily as possible.

ROBERT M. ROWE, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S. Eng.,
Surgeon, Out patient Department, French
Hospital, London.

EARLY SYPHILIS OF THE PROSTATE.

ACCORDING to Loyd Thompson¹ only 24 cases supposed to be syphilis of the prostate have been recorded in the literature, and of these only 12 are accepted as authentic. Of the 12 cases only two relate to an implication in the early stage—one was due to a direct extension from a primary sore which had become phagedaenic (Ricord), and the other was possibly a genuine metastatic infection, though the description of the case is meagre (Portillo).

The case here recorded is unique because the patient has never had gonorrhoea or even sexual connexion. In most of the cases of a gummatous prostatitis it is extremely difficult to rule out a possible gonococcal lesion. The patient, a man aged 28, presented himself with a hypertrophic chancre over the right parietal bone. The infection was conveyed, in my opinion, from wearing a hired wig. The body was covered with a diffuse lenticular syphilide, and the patient complained of bad headaches and pains in the bones and joints, and he was much troubled with acute indigestion. I timed the infection to have occurred fourteen weeks before I first saw him.

On asking him to pass water I found that a bead or two of pus appeared with the last few drops, a condition the patient

had noticed for the previous fortnight. There was never any blood or meatal discharge, but the urine contained threads and the patient always had the desire to micturate again when he had just finished. On examining the urethra I found acute inflammation of the prostatic portion, which was most marked around the open prostatic ducts. The mucous membrane bled easily. Rectal examination revealed the right lobe of the prostate swollen to the size of a hen's egg. The outline was uneven, the consistency was irregular, being soft in some places and hard in others; in fact a hard band seemed to cut the lobe longitudinally into two soft masses.

Under four intravenous injections of arseno-benzene both the urethra and prostate were restored to their normal condition.

London, W.

J. E. R. McDONAGH, F.R.C.S.

INFLUENZA (?) ACCOMPANIED BY CONVULSION.

AT 3 a.m. on January 26th, 1922, I was called to see F. T., a man aged 38, and found him propped up in bed, unconscious. The history was that he had never had any serious illness, but that for the last three days he had suffered from a cold, for which he did not go to bed or give up at all as his wife was expecting to be confined. He had gone to sleep as usual the previous evening; on waking at 2 a.m. his wife found his face and chest wet with cold sweat, and he did not answer when she spoke to him. He seemed to be choking; with the help of friends he was raised to a sitting position in bed, which eased the breathing. When I saw him his limbs were rigid, the arms were flexed at the elbow, and the fingers bent into the palms of the hands. The pupils were equal and slightly dilated, the eyeballs rolling upwards on raising the upper eyelid. There was slight gritting of the teeth, but the tongue was not bitten; respirations were slow but not stertorous, and the face was cyanosed; the temperature was normal. He remained in this condition for four hours, when the rigidity gradually passed off and consciousness returned. At 10 a.m. the only sign of meningeal irritation—supposing that to be the pathological factor—was a certain amount of slowness in speech and perception. There was no paralysis, and recovery was rapid and complete.

Incidentally the shock caused his wife to be so deaf for a time that she did not hear unless spoken to very loudly, but this condition passed off in six hours. After the shock she received at 2 a.m. she found no more signs of life in the foetus *in utero*, and on January 29th was delivered of a full-grown child which had every appearance of having been dead for a few days.

Cinderford, Glos.

J. N. BEADLES, M.B., B.S. Lond.

MALLET FINGER.

DR. LAIRD's excellent radiographs of a case of "mallet finger" in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of January 21st, illustrates a fairly common if not usual condition in this injury. I have only seen one case in which the small fragment of bone was not present. I have shown several similar radiographs at the Reading Pathological Society during the last ten years. I think Dr. Laird will find the characteristic detachment of a fragment of bone, where the insertion of the exterior tendon is torn off the phalanx, is well known to radiologists and surgeons.

Some years ago I gave Mr. Warren Low a similar radiograph; the injury at that time was well known to him, and he wanted a radiograph of it. The way this injury was produced in Dr. Laird's case was unusual and interesting.

Commonly a blow at the end of the finger, as from striking a door in the dark with the fingers extended, is the cause of the trouble. When not recognized and treated it produces a characteristic deformity.

Reading.

W. J. FOSTER, F.R.C.S.

THE Cox-Cavendish Electrical Company has issued a new edition of its catalogue of x-ray and electro-medical apparatus. It fills 340 pages, is freely illustrated, and divided into sections. Special attention is directed to the "Plurostat" earth-free universal apparatus. Inspection of the volume affords a good indication of the many activities of the company. A copy will, we are informed, be forwarded to readers of this *JOURNAL* on application to the company, which has show-rooms at 105, Great Portland Street, London, W.1, and 15, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

¹ *Amer. Journ. of Syphilis*, 1920, iv, 323.

and to the *Scottish Medical and Surgical Journal*; he edited the third edition of Milne's *Materia Medica* and of Milne's *Posological Tables*; he was the author of a *Manual of Materia Medica* and of *Posological Tables*, and he made contributions to various journals on "Changed Aloin," on "Jaborandi," on the "External Uses of Hydrate of Chloral," and other matters.

We have received the following appreciation, signed "F. M. C.":

In his 90th year, after a short illness, Dr. William Craig, the oldest medical practitioner in Edinburgh, has passed away, leaving behind him kindly memories of pleasant associations and the record of a helpful, active life. He was indeed a practical example of what loyalty and devotion to a profession can accomplish, for, while busily engaged in practice, he yet found time to support the leading medical and scientific societies, and considered it a duty to do his utmost by laying his capable business-like methods at their service in most unsparing fashion. A regular attendant at their meetings, he contributed interesting articles on various subjects, chiefly pharmacological, and exhibited pathological specimens. He occupied for many years the position of treasurer to the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society, and also signalized his duties as editor of its *Transactions* by compiling, in conjunction with his son, Dr. Peter Craig, a valuable analytic index of the first twenty volumes (new series). His services were also greatly in request in the Royal College of Surgeons and in the Obstetrical Society of Edinburgh, in addition to finding outlet elsewhere. Dr. Craig was an ardent botanist, and in his student days won the gold medal for his herbarium. A prominent member of the Botanical Society, he was also associated with the Botanical Club and the Scottish Alpine Club, where he was equally zealous and foremost. He spent many a happy day in mountain and glen, always welcome and in no small measure enhancing the enjoyment of every excursion. Upright, earnest, and genial, his interests in the old activities never waned, nor will his personality and kindly smile fade from the recollections of his numerous circle of friends.

We regret to record the death of Dr. JOHN FRANCIS PRIDIE, which took place suddenly at Southport, on January 27th. Born in Edinburgh, Dr. Pridie received his medical education at the university there, graduating M.B., C.M. in 1887. He afterwards studied at Göttingen, and held resident appointments at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh Royal Asylum, and Southport Infirmary. He went into practice at Chingford, near London, where he remained for thirteen years, but he returned to Southport seventeen years ago, entering into partnership with Dr. Barwise. In 1911 he became a member of the Town Council, on which he did much useful work, particularly in connexion with public health, and for the past year or two he had been vice-chairman of the health committee. He was much interested in medical affairs, and was president of the Southport Division of the British Medical Association, chairman of the Local Medical and Panel Committee, and vice chairman of Southport Medical Society. Dr. Pridie led a strenuous life, for, in addition to the claims of a large general practice, he devoted much attention to his municipal work. He leaves a widow and two sons, the elder of whom won the D.S.O. in the war, and has just passed his final examination in medicine.

Universities and Colleges.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

In a congregation held on Thursday, January 26th, the following degree was conferred:

BACHELOR OF MEDICINE (B.M., B.Ch.).—Gordon Cranstoun, Oriel College.

Science Departments.—In a congregation held on Tuesday, January 31st, a statute was introduced to modify the present method of administration of the natural science departments. The statute, which it is understood did not meet with the approval of the staffs of the natural science departments, was opposed. On a division, the preamble of the proposed statute was lost by 65 votes to 62. It is understood that a new statute will be brought in at an early date.

Radcliffe Travelling Fellowship.—An examination for a Fellowship of the annual value of £200, and tenable for three years, will be held during the present term at the University Museum, commencing on Tuesday, February 21st, at 10 a.m. Candidates must have passed all the examinations required by the University for the degree of Bachelor of Arts and for the degree of Bachelor of

Medicine. They must not have exceeded four years from the time of passing the last examination required for the degree of Bachelor of Medicine. The successful candidate must before election declare that he intends to devote himself during the period of his tenure of the Fellowship to the study of medical science and to travel abroad with a view to that study. The Regius Professor of Medicine and the Examiners, two months before the expiration of the second year after the election of each Fellow, present a report on the work done by him to the Electors, who may, if they think the report unsatisfactory, declare the Fellowship forfeited. The examination will occupy four days. Papers will be set in physiology, pathology, and preventive medicine, and a subject will be proposed for an essay. There will also be a practical examination in pathology.

The Services.

REVIVAL OF THE MILITIA.

In April, 1908, a Special Reserve of Officers was created by Royal Warrant and officers of the Militia were given commissions therein. A new Royal Warrant, dated January 27th, 1922, revives the "honourable designation of Militia for this branch of Our Service." Accordingly, this branch of the Reserve of Officers (with one exception in the case of Household troops) becomes part of the Militia, and officers who were serving therein on October 1st, 1921, are deemed officers of the Militia as from that date. An Army Council's instruction on the new Warrant states that the conditions of service and of remuneration of the Militia are under consideration. When they are published officers of the Special Reserve of Officers will be given the option of continuing to serve under those conditions or of resigning their commissions. In the meantime they will be subject to the existing regulations.

Medical News.

MR. PERCY SARGENT, C.M.G., D.S.O., has been appointed honorary consultant surgeon to the Ministry of Pensions.

A COURSE of eleven clinical lectures on the diagnosis and treatment of cancer will be given at the Cancer Hospital, Fulham Road, S.W., on Tuesdays and Fridays, at 4 p.m., commencing February 21st, when Sir Charles Ryall will speak on cancer of the tongue. The lecture on Friday, February 24th, will be given by Mr. W. E. Miles and will deal with cancer of the rectum. Medical practitioners are cordially invited to attend.

THE anniversary dinner of the Medical Society of London will be held at the Wharnclyffe Rooms, Hotel Great Central, on Wednesday, March 8th, at 7.30 o'clock.

MR. E. B. TURNER, F.R.C.S., will lecture on "Sex relationships," as discussed at the recent Church Congress, on Thursday, February 16th, at 8 p.m., at the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand. The meeting has been arranged by the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress.

THE estate of the late Sir G. Sims Woodhead, who died on December 29th, has been sworn of the gross value of £6,579.

IN connexion with Professor Henri Hartmann's lecture before the Medical Society of London on Monday next, February 13th, at 8.30 p.m., an exhibition of specimens illustrating inflammatory strictures of the rectum is being arranged, and will be on view in the Society's rooms on Monday afternoon and evening and on Tuesday morning.

A COURSE of five lectures on recent researches on the accessory food factors (vitamins) will be given by Dr. S. S. Zilva at the Battersea Polytechnic on Thursdays at 5.45 p.m., beginning on March 2nd.

A MEETING of the Medical Officers of Schools Association will be held at the house of the Medical Society of London, Chandos Street, W.1., on Wednesday, February 22nd, when Mr. George H. Widdows, F.R.I.B.A., architect and surveyor to the Derbyshire Education Committee, will open a discussion on the ideal class room.

AT the meeting of the West Kent Medico-Chirurgical Society to be held in the Board-room of the Miller General Hospital, Greenwich, to-day (Friday), at 8.45 p.m., Dr. C. O. Hawthorne will deliver an address, entitled "Some Pulse Tracings and their Meanings."

THE number of deaths from influenza during the week ending February 4th shows, as was expected, an appreciable decrease. In the 105 great towns of England and Wales the figures were 1,144 against 1,450 in the previous week; in the 96 great towns there were 1,121 deaths from the disease as against 1,420; in London the figures were 191 against 320. In certain South Wales towns there were considerable increases, and also in certain northern towns, including Liverpool, Wallasey, Leeds, York, and West Hartlepool, whilst in other places the numbers declined. The figures for Edinburgh and Glasgow were also below those for the previous week.

At the annual dinner of the Incorporated Vermin Repression Society, with Dr. Nathan Raw, M.P., in the chair, Colonel S. J. M. Auld suggested that the administration of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act (1919) should be taken out of the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture and handed over to the Ministry of Health. They did not ask for the prosecution of the small householder, who was really a sufferer from the overflow of vermin from congested centres, but they wanted to get at the headquarters of the rat, which was in wharves, warehouses, ships, and agricultural buildings, and they called for more prosecutions of the chief offenders. Mr. Alfred E. Moore (honorary director of the society) said that there had been few statutes so badly administered as the Rats Act; the Ministry of Agriculture was no friend of the Act, and the four men responsible for enforcing it upon the local authorities had been dismissed. "Rat weeks" in London were useless, because the rat simply used the sewers as highways to seek temporary sanctuary where they were not being persecuted. Mr. Mark Hovell, Dr. A. Balfour, and Professor F. Hobday were among others who spoke at the dinner.

THE Umberto I Prize of the Rizzoli Orthopaedic Institute, Bologna, has been awarded to Dr. Murk Jansen of Leyden in recognition of the high quality of the work submitted by him to the adjudicators.

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

As, owing to printing difficulties, the JOURNAL must be sent to press earlier than hitherto, it is essential that communications intended for the current issue should be received by the first post on Tuesday, and lengthy documents on Monday.

THE postal address of the BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION and BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL is 429, Strand, London, W.C.2. The telegraphic addresses are:

1. EDITOR of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, *Aitiology, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard.

2. FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND BUSINESS MANAGER (Advertisements, etc.), *Articulate, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard.

3. MEDICAL SECRETARY, *Medisecra, Westrand, London*; telephone, 2630, Gerrard. The address of the Irish Office of the British Medical Association is 16, South Frederick Street, Dublin (telegrams: *Bacillus, Dublin*; telephone, 4737, Dublin), and of the Scottish Office, 6, Rutland Square, Edinburgh (telegrams: *Associate, Edinburgh*; telephone, 4361, Central).

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"W. H. B." asks for advice in the treatment of an obstinate case of pityriasis rubra.

INCOME TAX.

"CUSTOMS" is in the service of a borough council. For 1919-20 he was first assessed on the salary payable for that year; later an additional assessment was made on a bonus which was in force for a portion of 1919-20, and now a further charge is raised to cancel certain allowances which ceased to apply at the higher amount of income.

** Our correspondent not unnaturally resents such repeated applications, but unfortunately he has no remedy. The Revenue authorities are entitled to correct an assessment within three years, and if his total income for 1919-20 exceeded £800 the cancellation of the allowances is legally justified. If that total exceeded £800 but not £1,000 he is entitled to an allowance for each child—in excess of two—who is a proper subject of claim—for example, if the allowance for three children has been cancelled £40 for one child should be restored.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

HERPES AND VARICELLA.

DR. H. B. WILLOUGHBY SMITH (Gainsborough) writes: I have recently had an interesting instance of the association or possible connexion between herpes zoster and varicella. Early in January this year I was called to see a boy, aged 7 years, who had a very well-marked eruption of herpes zoster, covering practically the whole of the area supplied by the third dorsal on the left side. Exactly twenty-one days later this boy's young sister developed a typical varicella eruption over the whole body. There are no cases of varicella in the vicinity, and neither child had been exposed to any possible outside infection. The connexion appears too close to be mere coincidence.

DR. ST. GEORGE B. DELISLE GRAY (Medical Officer, British Hospital, Oporto) writes: It may be of interest to add the following two cases to the many already published of the association of herpes with varicella. There was an epidemic of chicken-pox last year in Oporto. Towards the beginning of this epidemic I was called in to see a little girl who had typical varicella. On making enquiries as to contacts and other members of the

family the mother volunteered the statement that about a fortnight before she had had similar spots "on one side of the body which I thought was shingles." I have no doubt that she was right in her diagnosis. The other two child members of the family had chicken-pox in due course. About the same time I was consulted by the head of a school, who had a severe attack of herpes. A fortnight later there was an outbreak of chicken-pox at the school among the boarders at his house.

TUBERCULIN IN ASTHMA.

DR. F. E. GUNTER, D.S.O. (London, W.) writes: I was much interested in Dr. J. L. Rentoul's letter of February 4th, p. 212, on the use of tuberculin in asthma. He states that some cases do well but not all. The reason for this probably is that by no means all cases of asthma are of tuberculous origin. I test my cases with T.A.F. after the method advocated by Dr. Camac Wilkinson. If they react then I treat them either with P.T.O., which is excellent, or some other tuberculin preparation. If there is no reaction it is wiser to look for another cause of the asthma, such as some food idiosyncrasy.

DEPILATORIES.

A CORRESPONDENT, who has a lady patient with marked growth of hair on the chin, writes to inquire about an efficient depilatory. We published in 1920 (August 7th, August 21st, and September 11th) some notes upon this subject, which may be summarized as follows: The most satisfactory method of removal from the upper lip and chin is apparently by electrolysis; this, however, has the drawback that a slight degree of scarring is probable, while a certain percentage of hairs usually return at a later date. A depilatory powder which has been recommended consists of equal parts of barium sulphide and zinc oxide; this is made into a thick paste with water immediately before using. The directions are to rub the paste upon the lip or chin, and leave it on until it causes a slight smarting (one or two minutes); it is then washed off with water and some soothing ointment applied; the hair can be rubbed off in about ten minutes. A second, or even a third, application may be necessary, and it is better to go slowly than to risk wounding the skin by leaving the paste on too long the first time. Another correspondent wrote asking if there was any real objection to shaving with a safety razor. He had recommended this to two lady patients, with complete satisfaction to them as regards the result; of course it had to be done at fairly frequent intervals.

Our correspondent, therefore, can have his choice of treatments, but, as depilatory powders are really only a form of shaving, it is difficult to see any objection to the use of a safety razor, and even the best depilatories are apt to cause some irritation of the skin.

PELIOSIS RHEUMATICA.

A Correction.

DR. F. G. CLEMON, C.M.G. (Constantinople), writes: A small but unfortunate misprint occurs in my letter on this subject, which you were good enough to publish in your issue of January 28th (p. 168), and I shall be much obliged if you will allow me to make the following correction. The penultimate sentence should read: "Unfortunately, neither the patient nor his friends had realized the gravity of the condition and sent for me during the twenty-six or twenty-seven hours. . . ." My object was to state that patient and friends did not realize the gravity of the condition, and did not send for me, whereas the letter as printed exactly reverses the latter statement.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, and 39 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 34 and 35.

THE Home Secretary proposes to appoint a physician as medical referee under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, for County Court Circuit No. 32 (Norfolk). Applications to the Private Secretary, Home Office, by February 21st.

THE following vacant appointments of certifying factory surgeons are announced: Cheltenham (Gloucester), Pollokshaws (Lanark), Topsham (Devon), Wool (Dorset).

SCALE OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

	£	s.	d.
Six lines and under	0 9 0
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Whole single column (three columns to page)	7 10 0
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An average line contains six words.

All remittances by Post Office Orders must be made payable to the British Medical Association at the General Post Office, London. No responsibility will be accepted for any such remittance not so safeguarded.

Advertisements should be delivered, addressed to the Manager, 429, Strand, London, not later than the first post on Tuesday morning preceding publication, and, if not paid for at the time, should be accompanied by a reference.

NOTE.—It is against the rules of the Post Office to receive *postes restantes* letters addressed either in initials or numbers.