

"Whenever, following traumatism, even a slight abrupt irregularity of the spinal column is observed to coexist with paraplegia from this level, a cutting operation is indicated to determine whether the paralysis is not, by bony pressure, made incapable of spontaneous relief. This operation should be deferred no longer than recovery from the original shock of the injury demands. If needed at all, it is needed early; and we make a mistake if, as in my case, we wait until electricity and time have alike proved futile before attempting what I may call exploratory resection. It will be the easier by far to the surgeon at this early stage, and the safer for the patient; at least when the obvious displacement is due to a broken posterior arch, as then comparatively little bony section would be needed, the fragments not having become consolidated by bony union in their false position."

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## OTOLOGY.

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UNDER THE CHARGE OF

CHARLES H. BURNETT, M.D.,

SENIOR SURGEON, PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL, ETC., PHILADELPHIA.

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### MENTHOL IN FURUNCULOSIS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITORY CANAL.

DR. R. CHOLEWA, of Berlin, has treated successfully furunculosis in the ear by means of a twenty per cent. solution of menthol in oil, applied on cotton tufts to the canal of the ear. This is held to be antibacterial treatment. These tampons of cotton soaked in menthol solution exercise a slight pressure on the infiltrated spot. The slight burning soon ceases, and in the place of the darting pain, come relief and sleep at night. The cotton tufts can remain twenty-four hours in place, if there is no suppuration. If suppuration occurs, the boil must be opened.

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### ARTIFICIAL DRUM-MEMBRANE AS A CURATIVE AGENT.

DR. H. N. SPENCER, of St. Louis, Mo., has recently contributed a paper of great value on the above-named subject (*St. Louis Polyclinic*, July, 1889). The author, in 1876, at the International Medical Congress in Philadelphia, advanced two conclusions to a paper on the use of the artificial drum-membrane, viz.: 1. "Of the various forms of artificial drum-membrane in use, the cotton pellet is preferable for its great simplicity and easier introduction, for comparative safety in its employment, and for the greater uniformity of its effect." 2. "It has an advantage over other forms of artificial drum-membrane in that to the considerations named there may be added its value as a means of treating the tympanum; and this therapeutical use of the artificial membrane has a great future in otology."

The present paper considers the fulfilment of the prophecy then made.

Dr. Spencer inserts what he terms a "dry medicated artificial membrane, made of cotton agitated in finely powdered boric acid until the powder is thoroughly incorporated in all the interstices of the fibre. The cotton pellet thus prepared is then inserted as far as the fundus of the canal by means of the angular forceps.

It is claimed that the use of such an artificial drum-membrane favors the growth of a new membrane. It may be used even when the ear is discharging, as it tends to check the latter. Two cases are cited in which the hearing was improved, and the condition of the ear greatly benefited by this means of treatment.

#### THREE CASES OF AURAL POLYPUS IN WHICH THE NEOPLASM WAS OF GREAT SIZE, AND PRODUCED SERIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL SYMPTOMS.

DR. R. W. SEISS, of Philadelphia, contributes a paper with the above title in a recent number of the *University Medical Magazine*, July, 1889. In the first case, a woman, twenty-one years old, was affected with epileptiform seizures from the presence of a large polypus, extending from the drum to beyond the meatus externus. As soon as this peripheral irritation was removed the woman recovered.

In the second case, a man, twenty-three years old, was found to have complete paresis of the facial nerve, marked vertigo, weakness, and pallor. Examination revealed a large rugous polypus in the ear of the affected side. In the course of five or six weeks after removal of the polyp and antiseptic treatment of the ear, the paresis had disappeared, and the general health greatly improved.

In a third case, that of a man twenty-one years old, there had been a slight bloody discharge from the right ear for eight years, recently there had been pain. The patient had been weak, easily nauseated, and faint. A large, tough, mulberry-like polypus projected from the meatus; upon its removal the man's condition immediately improved.

#### THIRTEEN CASES OF CHRONIC PURULENT OTITIS MEDIA, TREATED BY EXCISION OF THE AUDITORY OSSICLES; WITH REMARKS.

DR. C. J. COLLES, of New York, has published an article with the above-named title in a recent number of the *Deutsche med. Wochenschrift* (No. 28, 1889).

After observing that the usual local treatment for chronic otorrhœa in many cases fails to bring about a cure, because the disease lying in the ossicles which have become necrotic, and the latter being held in the drum-cavity by synechial bands and the remnants of the membrana tympani and the normal ligaments of the ossicles, drainage is interfered with, and the diseased elements retained in the cavity of the attic. It has, therefore, become apparent to aurists that these diseased tissues, which prolong the suppuration, must be removed by excision if a radical cure is to be obtained. Hence, Schwartze, Kessel, and others in Germany, and Sexton, in this country, have practised excision of the remnants of the ossicles and the membrana tympani in cases of obstinate purulent otitis media.