

sults of extirpations of the uterus ; in each case a ureter was cut, and in two of the cases the ureters were cut and tied.

Dr. Chiari has of late examined eight hundred rectums with reference to the pathology of anal fistulæ. He has noticed that Morgagni's glands, situated just inside the anus, where the mucous membrane begins to take on the characteristics of true skin, although very shallow in young individuals, are often quite deep and large in old people, and that this appearance is often increased by the columnæ Morgagnii, the parts between the glands being thickened by hæmorrhoidal veins. He has succeeded in obtaining a series of specimens which show these glands in a great variety of conditions and sizes, — some shallow, some quite deep, some very deep and extending through the sphincter ani. On the other hand, he has found mucous membrane lining parts of the tracts of complete fistulæ. His idea is that when the rectum is full of fæces and the sphincter contracts, these glands, as parts of less resistance, are slowly pushed out, dragging the mucous membrane behind ; that once having pushed through the sphincter ani so that the fæcal matter cannot return to the bowel, the stagnating masses excite ulceration, and come gradually, though not always, directly to the surface. He thinks that the fact that the surgeon always looks for the opening of the fistula just inside the anus is a support to his theory. Whether this theory be accepted or not, perhaps the fact that some fistulous tracts are lined in part by mucous membrane will explain their obstinacy in healing, and suggest the inadequacy of treatment by simply cutting the outer wall.

J. W. E.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS.

CONSANGUINEOUS MARRIAGES.

MR. EDITOR, — At a recent meeting of the New England Psychological Society the subject for discussion was Consanguineous Marriages, with Special Reference to Progeny. With a desire to obtain some original data for use at that meeting I corresponded with the members of the North Middlesex District Medical Society, asking (1) how many marriages of near relatives had come within their knowledge, and (2) how many of these had resulted in offspring of unsound mind.

In reply I received accounts of twenty-five such marriages, resulting in the birth of one hundred and seven children. Of these, ninety-two were sane, four insane, and eleven idiotic. Of the fifteen whose minds were unsound nine became so from known causes other than the consanguinity of parents. Only six, then, of the one hundred and seven children could have been made insane by the near relationship of their parents, and even in these cases there may have been other causes.

This I am aware is but a trivial contribution to this subject, but it tends to show that the danger of such marriages is often exaggerated.

W. H. LATHROP.

TEWKSBURY, MASS., April 19, 1879.

CONTAGIA.

MR. EDITOR, — Will Dr. Alexander R. Becker, through the pages of the JOURNAL, kindly explain how it is that the "contagia," which he describes (page 673 of the JOURNAL of the 15th inst.) as greedily consuming the enormous quantities of water taken, but for the most part not eliminated, by the fever patient, fail to add to the volume and weight of his body ?

Very respectfully,

IRVING W. SMITH,

Physician to Kiowa, Comanche, and Wichita Indian Agency.

ANADARKO, INDIAN TERRITORY, May 24, 1879.