

Anesthesia of the Membrana Tympani.

MEMPHIS, TENN., Dec. 11, 1901.

To the Editor:—In the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* for October 5, 1901, page 574, Dr. Jack of Boston makes the following statement in speaking of acute otitis media: "I have little faith in the anesthetic properties of local applications of cocain on the inflamed ear, nor have I found any drug satisfactory in lessening the pain of an incision."

In THE JOURNAL A. M. A., for April 27, 1901, I published a letter on the subject of an anesthetic mixture for use on the drum membrane. Since its publication I have received numerous inquiries concerning the mixture and its use, an evidence that the subject is one of much interest, while favorable reports from some of my colleagues and the continued satisfaction which it has given me have further confirmed me in my opinion as to its value. Dr. Jack's statement leads me to make mention of it again. The mixture is composed of equal parts of cocain hydrochlorate, menthol and carbolic acid. The substances combine to form a slightly turbid liquid of a thin syrupy consistence, permitting its application with a cotton-tipped applicator. If this application is made with due gentleness there is no difficulty in using it on the drum even in little children. The canal should be first rendered aseptic with a warm bichlorid solution, which serves the additional purpose of removing particles of cerumen, desquamated epithelium, etc., which might obstruct the view of the deeper parts. After thoroughly drying the canal with a cotton-wrapped applicator, the anesthetic mixture is applied on another applicator similarly prepared with a very small amount of cotton, so that its contact with the drum can be watched and made to a small area. I usually make two or three applications to the posterior portion of the drum where the incision is to be made. There is a slight whitening of the parts touched, just enough to enable one to tell the extent of the anesthetized area. In a minute or two the drum is completely anesthetized and can be incised without pain. I have used the method a good many times on both inflamed and uninfamed drums, and in not one instance has it failed. Adults have frequently assured me that they felt no pain, and as frequently I have performed the operation in children without their ever knowing that anything had been done except the introduction of an applicator. Sometimes in nervous children who will not permit you to touch the aching ear it is necessary to give a general anesthetic, but this is on account of nervousness and not pain.

This mixture is certainly not so caustic as pure carbolic acid, while probably more anesthetic. I am inclined to believe that the carbolic acid is the most active ingredient and cocain the least active, judging from the action of these drugs under other forms in this locality. I agree with Dr. Jack as to the total absence of effect produced by cocain alone on the drum.

The points I have mentioned are largely those suggested by inquiries made of me concerning the preparation and use of this mixture. This mixture is not original with me, but was first published by Bonain in the *Rev. Hebdomadaire de Laryngologie*, June 17, 1899.

The recent report of alarming symptoms from the use of the anilin oil mixture used by English surgeons (A. A. Gray, *The Lancet*, April 21, 1900) for producing anesthesia of the drum, is another reason for my wishing to again call attention to Bonain's mixture, which is free from any deleterious effects.

There is a point in Dr. Jack's paper on which I would like some information. He speaks of emptying the middle ear after paracentesis, and subsequently by inflation. I am under the impression that this is a way productive of mastoid complications, and in several cases I believe I have seen them brought about by this practice. It is a very difficult point to prove, but the development of mastoid symptoms in cases where I was using inflation has somehow so impressed me with the fear that it might have been caused by the procedure, that it has lead me to abandon inflation and rely on aspiration and gauze drainage for emptying the middle ear, even in chronic suppurative cases.

Very truly,

E. C. ELLETT, M.D.

Book Notices.

A MANUAL OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE. By George Roe Lockwood, M.D., Professor of Practice in Woman's Medical College of New York Infirmary. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. With 79 illustrations and 20 Full-page Plates. Cloth. Pp. 847. Price, \$4.00 net. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders & Co. 1901.

This volume consists of a thorough revision of the first edition, with many portions rewritten and new subjects added. The descriptions of disease are plain and concise and the student in many cases gets a clearer and more enduring conception, for instance of broncho-pneumonia, than in many of the larger works. The work is well supplied with fever charts.

CHIMICA CLINICA. Dott. Raffaele Supino, Assistente alla Clinica Medical Generale di Pisa. Cloth. Pp. 198. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1902.

This is a very convenient little work on clinical chemistry covering the technique of qualitative analysis more particularly, according to various methods and covering also examinations of the principal fluids and secretions of the body. It also gives tests for various drugs and would be a convenient addition to the library of any practical physician who is acquainted with the language in which it is written.

INDUCTION COILS. How to Make, Use and Repair Them, Including Ruhmkorff, Tesla, and Medical Coils, Roentgen Radiography, Wireless Telegraphy, and Practical Information on Primary and Secondary Battery. By H. S. Norrie, Second Edition, Revised and Much Enlarged. Cloth. Pp. 269. Price, \$1.00. New York: Spon and Chamberlain, 1901.

This little work has been enlarged and brought up to the latest American practice in accordance with the increasing interest given to this subject. It has 79 illustrations.

ESSENTIALS OF OBSTETRICS. By Charles Jewett, A.M., M.D., Sc.D., Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Long Island College Hospital. Assisted by Harold F. Jewett, M.D. Second Edition. Illustrated by 80 Woodcuts and 5 Colored Plates. Cloth. Pp. 386. Price, \$2.25. New York and Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co. 1901.

This volume represents a thorough revision of the first edition. The author has endeavored to make plain to the student the essential facts of obstetrics, and has admirably succeeded in doing so in the chapters on the physiology and mechanism of labor. Several pages are devoted to artificial feeding.

DISEASES OF THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS in Infancy and Childhood, with Chapters on the Diet and General Management of Children, and Massage in Pediatrics. By Louis Starr, M.D., Late Clinical Professor of Diseases of Children in the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Third Edition; Rewritten and Enlarged. Illustrated. Cloth. Pp. 448. Price, \$3.00. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co. 1901.

The appearance of a new edition of Starr's work on digestive diseases in infancy and childhood will be welcomed by the profession. The author has revised his work to bring it up as nearly as possible to the advances that have been made during the last ten years. The most important additions are the sections on simple atrophy, infantile scurvy, rickets, lithemia, infectious follicular tonsillitis, naso-pharyngeal adenoid hypertrophy, proctitis and appendicitis. The milk modification question, which is so much to the fore at the present time, is also thoroughly treated.

Miscellany.

Physician Wanted.—A recent number of the *New York Herald* devotes half a column to an experience meeting of one of the local organizations which derives a large annual income from its boasted facilities for healing by prayer. The head financier was asked what was the proper course to pursue when a patient under the care of one of his followers died, in order to escape the embarrassment imposed by the Board of Health in refusing to permit burial without a certificate of death. The *Herald* quotes him as follows: "The alliance has always managed to avoid embarrassments of this kind. We must recognize the law of the state. What I advise is, that when a case is critical we should be in touch with a reasonable, considerate Christian physician, [italics ours] so that we can call him in to give this needed certificate. Thus we shall be able to respect the law and yet trust the Lord." We do not recall amongst our acquaintance a single physician "reasonable" enough to commit infor-