

THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF GALL- STONES.

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The treatment of gallstones can be divided into medical and surgical. For many years the medical treatment prevailed and the greater benefits to be obtained by surgical treatment were not duly appreciated. Owing to the great advances made in surgery the tables have been turned and the sufferers from gallstones obtain a much greater measure of relief. I know but little of the so-called medical treatment of gallstones, and I am very skeptical as to its practical value.

DANGERS INCURRED BY PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM GALLSTONES.

Not only is there a danger of sudden death from the passage of a gallstone, but there are many other dangers to be encountered. There is the great danger of gangrene of the gall bladder (closely resembling gangrene of the vermiform appendix), with rupture and death or with the formation of a secondary abscess; there is the danger of inflammation with empyema of the gall bladder, accompanied by chills, high fever and the occurrence of a suppurative pyelophlebitis followed by death. There is the danger that septic infection may travel from some ulcer produced by gallstone irritation of the mucous membrane of the gall bladder or ducts to the vessels of the liver. Even when no pus is to be found either in the gall bladder or gall ducts these septic conditions may spread beyond the confines of the gall bladder and produce inflammation of the peritoneum and surrounding structures. Abscesses may form external to the gall bladder and may perforate in various directions, up-