

the patients were permanently cured, and in the remaining twenty per cent. the pain was relieved, and the swelling removed in almost every case.—W. BREMER, M.D, in *Med. Rev.*

DR. LAUDER BRUNTON ON THE TREATMENT OF PILES AND ALLIED AFFECTIONS.

At a meeting of the Medical Society of London, held on March 7th, Dr. Lauder Brunton read a most interesting and useful paper on piles. We are unable to give the paper *in extenso*, but we are sure our readers will appreciate his remarks on the treatment of this painful and at times most obstinate affection. He said:—

"Turning, now, to the treatment of piles, we may consider, first, how we are to keep the liver in such a condition as to maintain a free supply of blood through it. For this purpose, we should insist on moderation in cases where we have reason to believe that either the food or the stimulants taken are in excess of the wants of the organism. The occasional administration of small doses of a mercurial purgative, followed by a mild saline, tends to keep the liver free and to prevent piles, although one may not know the exact *modus operandi* of the mercury upon the liver. Of course the saline ought not to be too violent, or it will tend to cause local congestion and make matters worse. Aloes bears an evil repute on account of its irritant action upon piles, but its effect depends upon the quantity given; and while a large dose of an aloetic pill will almost of a certainty produce rectal irritation, small doses, such as one-tenth grain of aloin three times a day with each meal, will tend to lessen piles by keeping up a gentle peristaltic action and preventing constipation. My friend, Mr. Archer, tells me that he has used with invariable success half an ounce of castor oil given to begin with, and followed up by half a drachm every morning for a month.

"I have already discussed the prevention of portal congestion from chills, but when it has occurred a useful application is a hot water india-rubber bag, with a plush or flannel covering, put under the back of the neck, and a similar one over the liver. These tend to restore the equilibrium of the circulation and lessen portal congestion.

"Exercise is useful in keeping the liver free, but this exercise must be of a certain kind. As I have already said, the liver is a very spongy organ, the blood pressure within it is very low, and the pressure under which bile is secreted is also very low. Both blood and bile, therefore, tend to stagnate within it, but this stagnation is lessened by the liver being rhythmically squeezed, more or less forcibly, between the diaphragm and abdominal muscles. In a person standing or

sitting upright, or lying on either side, this squeezing action is very slight; in a supine posture it is slightly greater. In ordinary walking it is also very slight, but in walking up a hill, and especially in climbing a mountain, the amount of pressure to which the liver is subject is considerable, because the muscles of the abdomen in such exercise are actively contracting, and the movements of the diaphragm during the panting breathing which occurs on exertion are much greater than when a person is quiet. A similar process of squeezing occurs in brisk horse exercise, either trotting or cantering, and thus riding is frequently beneficial for piles, notwithstanding the increased local irritation from contact with the saddle. Another useful exercise is to touch the toes with the fingers, keeping the knees straight, several times every morning.

"A regular action of the bowels is of the utmost importance in preventing piles, because it tends not only to keep the circulation through the liver free, but prevents straining. The different means of securing this regularity of action would require a paper to themselves, but a teaspoonful of compound liquorice powder at night, or confection of senna, either alone or with confection of sulphur or confection of pepper, are perhaps amongst the most widely employed of all the laxatives. No doubt the best times ordinarily for emptying the bowels is after breakfast, but if the piles tend to come down much it is better for the patient to get into the way of emptying the bowels before going to bed, so that he may secure rest in a recumbent position for several hours. Some patients in whom the piles come down easily spend a day of misery if they are obliged to go to the closet in the morning instead of the evening, because the piles tend to remain down all day and worry them.

"The soft unprinted papers which are now commonly sold are a very great improvement upon the ordinary newspapers, but even they sometimes give rise to a good deal of irritation. In cases where piles are very troublesome it is always well for the patient to wash the anus immediately after a motion. It is sometimes impossible for the patient to go from the closet to his bedroom and wash there, and I have found the easiest way of getting over this difficulty is for him to carry to the closet a soft sponge in a small india-rubber bag; an ordinary tobacco pouch is best. If it should be an earth closet, the patient should take the sponge full of water, and, after cleansing the anus gently with paper, he may thoroughly sponge, and then return the sponge to the bag. The anus may then be dried either with the porous paper, or with a small napkin which he carries with him. In the case of a water closet the sponge may be taken dry, and after the closet has been used the plug may be drawn and the sponge dipped in the