

Selected Articles.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND TREATMENT OF MOVABLE KIDNEY.

BY SIR FREDERICK TREVES, BART., K.C.V.O., C.B., LL.D.,
Sergeant Surgeon to H.M. the King.

Conspicuous among the maladies of modern times is the curious condition known as movable kidney. The early pathologists were aware of the various congenital anomalies of position to which the kidney is liable, but the movable kidney appears to have escaped their notice.

It does indeed still escape notice on the post-mortem table, its undue mobility practically ceasing with the patient's life. At the autopsy the organ is found in place, and there may be nothing to suggest that it had ever left its normal position. Moreover, it is not always possible to determine after death if a kidney had been clinically movable during life, except perhaps in cases in which the mobility has been extreme.

Ebstein* mentions that in 3,658 autopsies performed in the Charité at Berlin a movable kidney was found in 5 instances only, showing the proportion of the affection to be apparently 1 in 732.

On the other hand, Glénard asserts that among females no less than 22 per cent. of all adults have movable kidneys.

The discrepancy between these two quite precise statements is not a little astonishing, and serves to illustrate the differing views in which the movable kidney presents itself to the notice of the maker of post-mortems on the one hand, and the clinical diagnostician on the other.

While the silence of earlier writers on morbid anatomy is intelligible, and the results of modern pathological records are to be explained, it is difficult to understand how the movable kidney came to elude so long the notice of the clinical observer.

The displaced or displaceable organ is as a rule singularly easy to detect, and indeed is apt to thrust itself incontinently into notice. It has been more than once discovered by the introspective patient, who has been much terrified by the apparition and by the diablerie of its movements.

Yet in spite of this it seems to have escaped the cunning and watchful fingers of the man of medicine until quite recent times.

It could hardly have been included with the phantom tumors of bygone days, for the accounts of the phantom,

* Ziemssen's *Cyclopaedia of Medicine*. London. 1877.