

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF VARICOSE VEINS OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY.*

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IT is not my intention to go into any extensive discussion of the literature concerning the operative treatment of varicose veins of the lower extremity. Suffice it to say that those who have had much experience in operating on these cases, especially for the purpose of rendering men fit for the arduous duties of military service, will no doubt agree with me that the operations that we have been in the habit of performing do not cure the sufferer to the degree that we might wish.

Briefly, these methods have been:

(1) The Trendelenberg operation of ligation or excision of the upper end of the saphenous vein, for the purpose of removing the weight of the super-imposed column of blood. In certain mild cases, where the Trendelenberg sign is well marked this operation affords relief to the aching, but usually cannot be claimed to be a curative procedure.

(2) The Mayo stripping operation, added to the Trendelenberg method, is an advance in the right direction, but fails to consider an important factor in determining recurrence, viz., that the communicating veins, passing from the superficial varicosities through the deep fascia to the deeper venous channels, are left undisturbed.

(3) The Schede "garter," or circumcision operation, with its modification, the Friedel spiral incision, is useful in certain cases, but unless combined with the Trendelenberg operation, is practically certain to be followed by recurrence.

Dr. John Homans, of Boston, has made a very useful division of the etiology of these varicose conditions into two groups:

(1) The post-phlebitic.

(2) That larger group of gradual onset, due possibly to congenital deficiency, or weakness in the vessel wall.

This latter class is the most numerous, and is the one for which surgical relief is the most frequently demanded. It is to this group in particular that the following remarks apply.

If an effort is to be made to cure this condition, it would appear that there are three main indications to be met, keeping in mind that

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