

EXPLORATION OF THE KIDNEY IN A CASE OF
TUBERCULOUS PYELITIS.

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The following case is of interest, as showing the difficulty of diagnosis in the early stage of tuberculous disease of the kidney. All the symptoms at first were referable to the bladder, and the amount of pus in the urine was small. In many such cases the prominent early symptom is frequent micturition, and this may or may not be accompanied by pain, which, when excessive, may be due to tuberculous deposits in the bladder itself. When the man first came under my notice I considered that the disease was one of the kidneys and not of the bladder, because of the small amount of urea excreted daily and the absence of mucus from the urine. The personal and family history of the patient did not point to tuberculous disease, and the amount of pus was so small that it might easily have originated in the bladder. Careful examination revealed no tumor in the region of the kidney, but there was always discomfort and pain in the left lumbar region. Later on, when pus became more abundant and the amount of urine less, it was evident that there was some destructive disease of the kidney going on, due either to the presence of stone or tubercle. The sudden diminution of the flow of urine showed that both kidneys were inefficient, and it was decided to cut down on the tumor which was now present in the region of the left kidney in the hope of finding a stone which was preventing the outflow of urine. When the operation was performed the man was in an uræmic condition, and evidently had not long to live.

The operation is instructive, and this lesson is to be learned from it, viz., that no mere external examination of the kidney can satisfactorily determine its condition, and that in every case an incision should be made into the organ and the parts explored with the probe or finger. The aspirator failed to evacuate the contained pus, because it was so thick and tenacious, although a previous exploration had revealed its presence in small amount. In cases of tuberculous pyelitis the disease is often symmetrical,