

Publishers' Department

SURGICAL DISEASES OF THE UMBILICUS.—T. S. Cullen, Baltimore (*Journal A. M. A.*, February 11), after noticing the principal literature of the subject, enumerates and discusses the surgical disorders affecting the umbilicus. Among the non-malignant abnormalities he mentions so-called adenoma, funnel-shaped umbilicus, cystic cavities in the abdominal wall, attachment of Meckel's diverticulum to the navel, patent omphalomesenteric duct, and prolapsus of the bowel through such duct. The term adenoma is a misnomer, but has been so long in use that he employs it. It simply consists in the funnel of mucosa being forced outward and turned inside out. Adenoma may be ligated and cut off or allowed to drop. The parents should be cautioned to watch the child for any obstruction occurring. A funnel-shaped umbilicus can be removed by an elliptical incision removing the entire area and exploring for Meckel's diverticulum, which, if found, should be removed. Where very small fecal fistula exists, one may wait a while for its closure, but, if open after six months, it should be dissected out down to the ileum and removed. A lookout should be made for obstruction in any case. When large it should be removed at once, which is not very dangerous in a healthy child. When prolapsus with inversion has occurred, signs of shock have usually appeared and the chances of saving the child are slight. Of the malignant growths of the umbilicus, four varieties are recognized: (1) primary squamous-celled carcinoma; (2) primary adenocarcinoma; (3) sarcoma; (4) secondary carcinoma. The first of these is very rare and its gross appearance is that of skin cancer ulcer. Primary adenocarcinoma seems to be more frequent, but there is some confusion about it because of the possibility of its being secondary to disease elsewhere. Pernice has collected six cases of sarcoma, but Cullen seems to think that the evidence is not very convincing regarding most of them, which may have been fibromata. Secondary carcinoma is the most interesting of the four and is treated of at some length. If an umbilical nodule is detected in a middle-aged person, Cullen says the condition of the abdominal organs must be thoroughly investigated for signs of cancer of the stomach, gall bladder, intestines, or genital organs. The futility of removing the umbilicus when the primary growth is in the abdomen is especially emphasized. The article is illustrated.