

or the Vortices of Descartes, are entitled to rank as physical science in the modern acceptance of the words.

**THE CURABILITY OF CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER.**—In a lecture delivered some time ago at the University of Naples, Professor Semmola called attention again to his method of treatment of cirrhosis of the liver, which he had first proposed in 1879 at the Amsterdam Congress, although he had suggested the possibility of curing the disease ten years before that time. The method is a very simple one, and consists in the enforcement of a pure milk diet, no solid food whatever being allowed. By this diet, he claims, nutrition is sustained, while the least possible work is put upon the digestive organs, and it is upon this physiological rest that he relies for a cure of the beginning cirrhosis. It is, of course, only in the earlier stages of the disease that a cure can be expected, that this, during the stage of interstitial hepatitis, before atrophy of the organ has advanced.

In this connection, the lecturer took occasion to inveigh against too great a devotion to pathology, which tended, he thought, to promote pessimism in therapeutics. At the post-mortem table interstitial hepatitis is generally founded in its atrophic stage, when the newly-formed tissue has become fibrous and contracted, and when no hope of cure can be entertained. One who has such a picture always before his mind, as the interpretation of the early symptoms of the disease, is not encouraged to treat the affection to the end of effecting a cure. Professor Semmola reported several cases in which the symptoms pointed to an early stage of hepatic cirrhosis, and in which a cure was obtained by means of a rigid adherence to a milk diet without solid food or drugs.—*Medical Record.*

**DUODENAL ULCER AFTER A BURN.**—From the records of a great many cases of this lesion, it appears that: 1. It may occur three or four days after a burn or scald, or may be delayed for many weeks. 2. In two cases it followed not a burn but a frost-bite. 3. In only one case (P. Hewett) it is recorded that the raw surface of the burn took on an unhealthy

action at the time when symptoms of duodenal ulceration were first observed. 4. Not one case showed true pyæmic abscesses elsewhere: nor, in most of the cases, is there any record of marked sigus during life of pyæmia or septicæmia: nor are there other lesions found *post mortem*: the duodenum suffers alone.

Many theories have been suggested as to the causes of this lesion: that it is due to an "acute oligocythæmia"; to dissolution of the red blood corpuscles; to the administration of ardent spirits immediately after the burn to septic infection, aided perhaps by self-digestion; to embolism. But the experiments of Brown-Sequard, who found that section of the lumbar cord, or of the sciatic and anterior crural nerves, prevented congestion and ecchymoses of the viscera, in dogs whose lower extremities had been burned, show that the nervous system is concerned in the production of this lesion. The frequent occurrence of invagination in burnt children, and the case of sudden acute tympanites after a burn, recorded by Dr. Gibb, point in the same direction.

Perhaps this congestion or ulceration of the duodenum after a burn is in some cases akin to the congestion and suppuration of the parotid in injury or disease of the pelvic or abdominal viscera; a lesion which may be associated with septic infection, but is associated also with reflex nerve influences, and is a solitary focus of inflammation in nine cases out of ten. The duodenum lies closer than any other part of the intestines to the great sympathetic plexuses: it is not fanciful to suppose that the first step toward ulceration is made by some alteration or suppression of its secretions, brought about by the influence of the nervous system.—STEPHEN PAGET.

### CONTAGIOUS PNEUMONIA.

Dr. F. Mosler, in a paper read before the Greifswald Medical Society, gives details of a series of cases of acute pneumonia in a family where there seemed every reason for believing that contagion was the cause of the spread of the disease. The patients were all attacked dur-