

purely mechanical means that does not exact and is exempt from surgical skill.

9. The term urethral fever has been objected to and urinary fever substituted on the assumption that the absorption of urinary constituents is the chief factor in the genesis of the complaint, but I do not think the choice of the substitute a happy one.

10. As to the ultimate results, thorough dilatation compares most favorably with urethrotomy.

It seems improbable that the absorption of urine can obtain in sufficient quantity from an epithelial abrasion produced by the passage of a sound that is capable of producing in rapid sequence rigors, fevers, suppression of urine, uræmic coma, and death.—*Dr. Alex. W. Stern in Journal of Cutaneous and Genito-urinary Diseases.*

INSANITY PROCEEDING FROM THE COLON.—The term "reflex" as applied to certain pathological conditions has been so often misused, and such erroneous conceptions have been formed under this all-embracing title, that we confess to a dislike of the term and only consent to use it in its most restricted sense. One has only to refer to the vast number of surgical procedures relegated to oblivion, to emphasize the erroneous conceptions formed regarding the reflex nature of some nervous disorders; clitoridectomy, circumcision, even castration, and lastly oophorectomy, which we believe to be still somewhat in fashion. Scarcely a portion of the body, or organ has escaped, and the recent literature from the pens of those who devote special attention to the diseases of a single organ, is filled with cases illustrating the potency and power of the particular organ, which they treat, to cause reflex nervous disorders. The ophthalmologist, not content with his reflex headache, neuralgia, etc., has recently added epilepsy to the list; the rhinologist has appended asthma to the pharyngeal tonsil; and a homœopathic surgeon has recently begun to dilate the anal sphincter and scrape out the rectum for almost every disease from hæmorrhoids to alopecia. The colon has thus far largely escaped; not, we think, through want of importance, but solely because no one seems to have devoted especial consideration to the diseases of this organ. The "colonologist" belongs to the future. So far as

my knowledge extends the earliest writer to call attention to the colon as a reflex cause of insanity, was Schroeder von der Kolk. It formed no mean division of his order of sympathetic insanities, only yielding in importance to the uterus and sexual parts. He regarded the trouble as a true reflex, an irritation beginning in the peripheral endings of the sympathetic nerves, propagated to the vaso-motor supply of the central nervous system, and there working disorder principally in the circulation. In these days of germs and ptomaines, a more acceptable theory to many will be that we have, in these cases, a true auto-infection: an addition to the blood of noxious elements which, circulating through the nervous system, produce toxic effects. It is probable that both theories have an element of truth. In some cases there may be a direct poisoning of the blood, while in others the disorders may be purely reflex in character. Von der Kolk was himself affected with this disorder. While suffering from constipation and fatigue from overwork, hallucinations and phantasms appeared to him and continued for three days. A large clyster was administered, which was followed by a copious evacuation of foul-smelling fecal matter; immediately the hallucinations disappeared and his mind became tranquil. There are no distinguishing symptoms of this condition, but an intellectual disturbance which has its origin in this source, is said by Schroeder to be characterized by a peculiar depression of spirits, by anguish of mind, and by the patient's self-accusations of wretchedness and baseness. The disease has a very slow course, and generally the mental anguish has existed for some time before the physician is consulted. . . . Regarding the treatment of this condition we incline to the view expressed by von der Kolk, who says: "All remedies which act as violent irritants of the colon, the so called drastics, only increase the tendency to stricture, they add to the sensibility of the colon, and the accumulation of blood in it, and cause watery stools, while the hard masses in the upper portion of the large intestine still remain. The disquietude, the excitement, and the uneasy feeling of the patient are thereby increased, but the strength is diminished, if these medicines are continued for any length of time; the circulation becomes