

I have been called to attend some cases lately, by men who realized the importance of early operation and the seriousness of delay and the complications liable to arise. Their treatment had been rest in bed, restricted diet, bowels evacuated usually with oil or divided doses of calomel and salines, when the stomach would retain any of these, and locally an ice bag, or hot applications, of these two I prefer the ice bag.

When possible a thorough evacuation of the bowels in the beginning, not only diminishes pain but also aids the peritoneum and intestinal tract in disposing of effete and poisonous matter. This is good routine treatment in the beginning of any illness.

Beyond this preliminary treatment I cannot see what medicine has to offer, or can do for an inflamed appendix which is liable to be converted into a pus tube, perforate, become gangrenous or result in acute septic peritonitis, all of which may occur in a very few hours.

I may have been unusually unfortunate in meeting more cases, however, where delay had been the rule and the patient had received a full dose of the expectant treatment, frequently combined with opium.

If the patient recovers, many of these practitioners flatter themselves that they have cured the case.

But what is the condition of the appendix? Is it not in a worse pathological state than before the attack?

Does this not explain the cause of the successive attacks these patients unvariably have? Each attack, if the patient is fortunate enough to worry through, increases the morbid condition and adds to his future danger.

Severe pains being one of the pronounced symptoms of this disease, opium in some form is given by many, which soothes the poor victim and he is kept under its influence, with what result? The bowels are paralysed and distended, the peritoneum is less active and everything is in a more favorable state for sepsis to thrive and extend.

All symptoms are masked, the patient is comfortable and apparently doing well and the attending physician is blindfolded. more or less suddenly the patient's true condition