

THE SURGICAL ASPECTS OF HEMOPHILIA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HEMARTHROSIS.

BY BEVERLEY MILNER, M.D., C.M.

Associate Surgeon to the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.

Two cases of this uncommon disease having been under my constant observation for the past twelve years, I have thought it would be interesting to the profession to learn my experience, especially as I have often been sorely perplexed and unable to receive any aid from medical literature. Owing to the rarity of the disease there must be cases of hemarthrosis resulting in deformity which might have been avoided had the true condition been diagnosed. One such case came under my notice a few months ago.

Our present knowledge of hemophilia is summed up in the definition: A congenital and hereditary disease of the vascular system, characterized by the occurrence of obstinate hemorrhages of traumatic origin.

Time does not permit of an historical survey of this disease; suffice it to say that it was recognized as early as the twelfth century. Hemophilia is probably the most hereditary of all diseases, and is peculiarly unique in the manner of transmission in that, while it is usually transmitted through the females to the male offspring, the former rarely, if ever, have the disease themselves. The sons of a bleeder and his brother's sons are, as a general rule, free from the disease, but his sisters and daughters transmit the disorder to their male offspring, and in the latter the disease is often of a very severe type. It occurs among all races and in all climates, and though climate is a negative factor in the etiology of this disease, it certainly influences the symptoms, as hemophilic joints are often tender and painful in cold, wet weather, thus very closely simulating rheumatism.

There have been many classifications made of hemophilia, viz., spontaneous, traumatic, acquired, etc., but that made by Weil is the simplest and most reasonable. He speaks of two types: (1) the hereditary, and (2) the sporadic. The hemorrhages are always traumatic in origin. Many authors speak of hemorrhages occurring spontaneously, but it is extremely doubtful if such is the case. If it were the case internal hemorrhages would not be so rare. In the three cases of hematuria that I have seen the cause was quite apparent in two of them,