

culating blood. The pus is either the result of a transformation of a portion of the latter, or it obtains entrance into the circulation through veins accidentally opened.

The consequence of the admixture almost always, though not necessarily, is stasis in the capillaries and the conversion of the blood of these into pus, with the formation of abscesses; and in this manner the latter may originate in greater or lesser number in the liver, spleen, kidneys, lungs, brain, and more rarely in other organs, as beneath the skin, in the muscles, and in the joints.* This transformation of the blood into pus, is most frequently induced by the spontaneous conversion of coagulated blood into that material.

The definition above given of pyæmia is not the usual one, but I hope the following explanation will justify its adoption.

On examining cases which have died after extensive surgical operations, and more especially where suppurating wounds have existed, frequently abscesses are found in the lungs, liver, sometimes in the kidneys, spleen, other or internal or some external organ. This fact, long known, since the last century, has been the subject of numerous theoretical and experimental researches to determine its character. These investigations, which have always borne the impress of the times, and the ideas of the prevailing school, evidently are not only of scientific interest, but are of practical importance, as upon the exactness of our knowledge of the production of such abscesses, we can alone depend for precautionary measures to diminish the great mortality which still follows amputations.

The first idea which obtruded itself as an explanation was that the pus of a suppurating wound became absorbed, and was deposited in the organs above indicated, constituting the so-called metastatic abscesses. This view was supported by the usual diminution of suppuration in the wound, the absence of evident inflammatory symptoms in the organs which had become the seat of the metastatic abscesses in so short a period, and the presence of pus in the veins and lymphatics, frequently themselves uninfamed.

But to this explanation, latterly, the objection has been advanced, that as pus consists of a liquid with solid corpuscles, which cannot be resorbed through capillary walls,

* "Perhaps the time is not far off when we shall return to the view of De Haen, which considered that, under certain circumstances, pus could form in the blood, as does urea in the physiological condition."—*Andral*.