

The Removal of the Uterine Appendages for Nervous Diseases.

At the Boston Society for Medical Improvement the above subject was recently fully discussed. The question was introduced by a paper from Dr. W. H. Baker. Two things were strongly brought out in the paper. The first was that the greatest care should be taken not to operate on healthy appendages for the relief of nervous diseases; and the second was that if there was clearly some pathological condition of the uterine appendages, giving rise to constitutional disturbance, or nervousness, an operation might be the only means of treatment. Dr. Baker summed up his paper as follows: Diseases of the ovaries and tubes are sometimes the cause of nervous diseases. The adhesions that result from pelvic peritonitis may cause nervous diseases. The extent of pelvic disease is no test of the amount of nervous disease that follows from it. In all cases of obscure nervous disease, the pelvic organs should be thoroughly examined. Some forms of uterine disease may cause so much nervous disturbance as to justify the removal of the healthy ovaries.

Dr. J. Homans, in the discussion of the paper, gave his experience and reported his cases. He concluded his remarks with the following words: "My belief in the efficacy of removal of healthy ovaries and tubes for the relief of nervous disease is very slight. I think it may once in twenty times, perhaps, do some good; but I should never do it without the advice of some alienist in whom I had confidence." It may be remarked regarding the above opinions of Dr. Homans, that any severe injury or operation might have a very decided effect on nervous disease, though not done to the pelvic organs.

Dr. R. T. Edes then followed with sound words of caution. He held that healthy ovaries and tubes had been removed on far too many occasions. When a man began reporting his hundredth case of such operations for the treatment of nervous diseases, he thought something was decidedly wrong. He had known where the operation had been strongly advised, that a recovery took place by waiting a while. He had also seen death from the operation, by shock and depression, where there was no sepsis. He was glad the surgeons of Boston were more conservative than in some places.

Dr. F. H. Davenport held that the removal of healthy ovaries for the relief of nervous disease should be exceedingly rare. He was of opinion that all other methods of treatment ought to be well tried. Those who were readiest to remove the appendages for very slight