

intrusted to a nurse. Besides, in hospital practice the nozzle of a syringe, to say nothing of the fingers of a nurse, is, I fear, so often one of the vehicles for the transmission of virus, as to make this means of disinfection of doubtful propriety. In a local outbreak of fever, especially of the diphtheritic form, I should, however, suggest the use immediately after labor, of vaginal injections containing the nitrate of silver or the persulphate of iron, in quantities large enough to sear over the traumatic lesions of labor. Such injections I have had no occasion to try, but, they ought to inhibit active absorption and promote healthy granulation.

ON THE PREVENTION OF MAMMARY ABSCESES BY THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF REST.

Dr. W. BATHURST WOODMAN read a paper on this subject before the Obstetrical Society of London (*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Jan. 16, 1875). He had been struck with the rarity of mammary abscesses in animals, notwithstanding the forced abstinence from suckling which cats and dogs undergo from the drowning of their progeny, and in spite of the great distension of the udders of cows, mares, and other animals when driven to market, or for other reasons separated from their young. Acting upon this suggestion, he carefully abstained from those manipulations and questionable "gentle" frictions which have so long been customary in such cases, and with the most satisfactory results. Where an abscess was threatening, in place of employing liniments he enjoined perfect rest, the avoidance of all frictions and rough handling, and of suckling for a time—if possible from both breasts, but at all events from the most implicated; the horizontal position, careful application of strips of isinglass, soap, or lead plaster, or of an air-cushion with a hole in the centre, or of bandages taking their purchase from the opposite shoulder. In addition to these measures he employed preparations of opium, belladonna, or chloroform, applied in compresses, or ice, moist warmth, and leeches; the local congestion being also relieved by diaphoretics, diuretics, and aperients—belladonna, iodide of potassium, and sedatives being given if requisite. Illustrative cases of this method of treatment were given, exemplifying its advantages.

Dr. BARNES observed that the principle of rest had long been applied to the treatment of inflammation of the breast. He himself had learned the value of it from Trousseau, when a student in Paris thirty years ago. That admirable physician taught and illustrated it with great earnestness. He placed the breast at perfect rest by carrying straps of leather spread with *emplateur de vigo*, all round it, so as to lift it well up and exert constant support on the vessels. Thus cedema was prevented, and engorgement soon subsided. It must, however, be remembered that this form of pressure was ill borne in the first inflammatory stage. It was chiefly serviceable when suppuration had taken place and the abscess had been opened; the sac then rapidly closed. In

the earlier stage he had seen leeches do excellent service. The pressure then must be lighter.

Dr. ASHBURTON THOMPSON said there were two modes of treatment not referred to in this paper—the administration of tincture of aconite, and total abstinence from fluids during the necessary number of days. By giving minum doses of aconite every hour he had succeeded in cutting short inflammations of the breast which there was no doubt would otherwise have run on to suppuration very frequently; indeed, in three cases out of four. In cases of still-birth he had hitherto found abstinence from fluids sufficient in every case to avoid every kind of mammary disturbance. Ice was allowed in moderate quantity, and no other fluid, from the time of delivery until the fourth or fifth day, when the breasts generally return to their normal state of quiescence. He had had two cases recently in which this method of treatment had been perfectly successful. The deprivation of fluid caused but little distress.

Dr. BRAXTON HICKS thought the principle of rest had been gradually coming upon us for years, friction only being resorted to among the poor and ill-educated. Surgery at the present day was all tending to quietude. Manipulations only led to suppuration, and often produced the extra amount of stimulation required to set it up.

Dr. MURRAY observed that the application of belladonna plaster was of great service, keeping the arm at the same time fastened to the side. In some instances a slight process of friction upwards was productive of good.

Dr. MATTHEWS, whilst heartily assenting to Dr. Woodman's views, thought that the public also had largely endorsed his practice, since he had observed that it was a very common proceeding to apply a large lead plaster (spread upon leather) to the breast in cases where it becomes necessary to get rid of the milk; this of course rendered friction and all meddling impossible. He had found two large and suitable handkerchiefs suitably applied—one by way of going across the neck under the breast, the other in exactly the reverse way, over the breast, and tied around the body so as to include the breast between them, interposing a large pad of cotton-wool—to constitute a very efficient mode of applying pressure.

Dr. EDIS remarked that the chief thing to be remembered was to limit the supplies, to act on the bowels, and to insure perfect rest to the mammae. He was accustomed to order a belladonna plaster to be applied to the mammary region within twenty-four hours of delivery, thus exercising pressure as well as arresting the secretion of milk. Abstinence from fluids and great moderation in diet were enjoined for the first few days, an aperient mixture of sulphate of magnesia and iodide of potassium being given twice or thrice daily to relieve the bowels. The shoulders should be raised, and the arms kept perfectly quiet; the upper part of the chest being only lightly covered; any friction or drawing of the breasts being strictly prohibited. Where this method had been adopted he had never seen a single instance of mammary abscess. An evaporating lotion continuously applied to the mammae was in some