

A CASE OF URETHRAL FISTULA CURED WITH MERCUROL.

BY B. A. ARNOLD, M.D., FREEPORT, ILLINOIS.

It is generally conceded that the salts of mercury, particularly the corrosive chloride and the red iodide, are the most powerful antiseptics and germicides that we possess. An effective germicide, as Bartholow says, "is destructive not only of the organism, but of its ova. Experience has demonstrated that the germ—the microbe—may be killed and yet the ova resist the action of the germicide, and hence pullulation goes on as actively as before. No antiseptic is entitled to be so designated, unless its power is equal to the destruction of the organism, and of its ova also."

Unfortunately, the use of mercuric chloride and mercuric iodide is attended with a number of objectionable sequences that are practically insurmountable. The chief of these are the decidedly irritating effect of both salts upon the living tissues, and their well-known coagulating effect upon the albumins. The former difficulty may be partially overcome, it is true, by excessive attenuation, although at the risk of sacrificing germicidal power: the latter cannot be so lightly disposed of. It is probable that the first effect of mercurial chloride upon a microbe is coagulation of its albuminous cell-wall, for structurally a microbe is only a tiny cell of special form. In that manner the microbe becomes invested with an impervious coat of coagulated albumin, which effectually protects its self-contained spores from the destructive effect of the germicide.

That was an auspicious mental effort which gave birth to the most available mercuric germicide yet produced—I refer to the combination of nuclein with mercury, known as mercuriol. Nuclein is found in the leucocytes; it is intimately associated with vital processes; and is in some way a natural means of defence of the human organism against germ invasion. Mercuriol is perfectly soluble in water; it does not coagulate albumin, and it therefore penetrates more deeply into the tissues than substances which have that effect. Mercuriol is being used with success in the treatment of inflammations—simple and specific—of the mucous membranes of the eye and urethra. In the treatment of gonorrhœa I regard it as almost a specific.

It is not my desire to present a lengthy paper upon this topic, interesting though it may be, but I will merely refer to a case which I have had under treatment for the past ten days, which has impressed me deeply with the value of mercuriol in handling such