

Progress of Medical Science.

THERAPEUTICS.

IN CHARGE OF GRAHAM CHAMBERS AND J. T. FOTHERINGHAM.

Some Uses of Formaldehyde.

Mitchell, of Bradford, England, in *British Med. Journ.*, February 11th, 1899, gives a very interesting account of the successful use of formalin as escharotic in the removal of sarcoma of the jaw, a second recurrence and inoperable. He employed it to check hemorrhage from a fungating portion of the growth, which was fully as large as a man's fist. After applying solution of india rubber to protect the surrounding part he applied over the bleeding area a pad of absorbent cotton soaked in a formalin solution containing 20 per cent. formaldehyde and carried it in with gutta percha tissue and a bandage. In twenty-four hours there was a necrosis of a quarter of an inch in depth. By constant repetition of the process he "eventually removed the tumor completely," using, of course, sharp spoon and scalpel every day for removal of dead tissue, and carefully leaving enough of the latter to avoid hemorrhage. The pain was pretty severe at times but easily controlled by nepeuth. After a few days' suspension of the use of the formalin a line of demarcation formed exactly like that in dry senile gangrene of the toes. The interesting communication ends with the following conclusions:

1. It is simple in the extreme, requiring no special apparatus, and can be applied without an anesthetic.
2. It produces no shock.
3. It does not, like electrolysis, set up a diffuse suppurative process, being not only aseptic, but powerfully antiseptic.
4. It is bloodless, and can be applied to very vascular growths, as this case shows.
5. It has very much greater penetrating power, and hence effects a more rapid removal than the usual escharotics, and its application does not like those give rise to a disintegrative or caustic process, with the resulting discharge, but is what I might term a necropietic process, and with no discharge whatever.
6. As there is no discharge scarcely any dressing material is required, and an economy is thus effected.
7. During the paring away of the necrosed parts the macroscopic limits of such a tumor can easily be seen on the dry