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## SYMPTOMS OF APPENDICITIS.\*

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IN the proper treatment of any abnormality of the human body, the first necessity is a correct diagnosis and in few of these abnormal conditions is a correct and prompt diagnosis more important than in an acute inflammation of the vermiform appendix. There are few acute disorders that will bear delayed and haphazard treatment, whether that treatment be radical or palliative.

Important as is the diagnosis, it is not easy. Like so many of the problems of the physician or surgeon there are no axioms, or postulates of mathematical exactness for his guidance. The axioms are preceded by an "if" and postulates followed by a note of interrogation, for there are so many other disturbances of the abdominal organs that simulate more or less accurately an inflamed appendix with its far reaching sequelæ.

The first symptom that obtrudes itself on the patient is pain, in acute cases, sharp, sudden, radiating, spasmodic, and generally referred to epigastrium. The patient is unlikely to be able to definitely locate any one part that is the central cause of his distress, and on palpation there may be, at first little rigidity of the abdominal muscles and little sensitiveness.

In this early period the radiating pain may often be either a help in locating the position of the appendix, or an embarrassment in diagnosis for while McBurney's point will more or less accurately mark the majority of appendices, it is by no means unvaryingly to be relied upon. The appendix may be found down in the pelvis, up close to the liver, outside or behind the cæcum or ascending colon and even to the left of the median line. To further complicate diagnosis, it varies in size from a mere nodule a quarter of an inch in extent to a length of nine and a half inches and in a diseased condition a diameter of an inch and a quarter. The average length of three and a half inches and diameter of a quarter of an inch, is perhaps as frequently found as the position at McBurney's point.

An inflamed appendix that lies outside or behind the cæcum will be accompanied by pain radiating upwards to loin, while if it lies low in pelvis near the bladder or ureter there will be vesical irritability with distress and even pain and retraction of testicle as in acute cystitis

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\*Read at a meeting of the medical staff.