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A CASE OF ACUTE MECHANICAL ILEUS—OPERATION— RECOVERY—REMARKS ON DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.*

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“The frequent necessity of resection for the relief of intestinal obstruction is a sombre commentary on the diagnostic ability of the profession. In the very large majority of cases, delay in surgical interference is responsible rather than the primary cause of the Ileus.”

These are the opening sentences of an article read in the section on Surgery at the last meeting of the American Medical Association by William J. Mayo. Notwithstanding such comments of so weighty an authority, for obvious reasons it is not unlikely that resection will for some time be necessary in cases of Ileus to give a patient a chance for life. The general practitioner does not meet with cases of obstruction of the bowels so frequently that the diagnosis will ever become so manifestly easy that his acumen will enable him to operate himself or to turn over such cases to the surgeon before necrosis supervenes. Indeed, to the most experienced, the diagnosis is not always clear, but often exceptionally difficult. The late Dr. Nicholas Senn wrote, “That the weak side of intestinal surgery to-day is the uncertainty of the diagnosis.” Vascular strangulation occurs so rapidly in most cases that relief can be obtained only by removal of the damaged intestine.

It is more for the purpose of inviting a discussion of the most important question of the diagnosis and early recognition of cases

Read at the meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa, June, 1908.