

FAUCIAL TONSILS—ABNORMAL CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT.*

By JOHN HUNTER, M.B.

In medicine as in war it is the results that attract attention rather than the slower processes that lead up to them. In war the tidings of victory or defeat are heralded world-wide whereas but little interest is taken in the details that assured the victory or the neglect of which courted defeat. With our patients we are very anxious to ascertain the morbid conditions present, but are we not likely to be far less zealous in endeavoring to seek out other possible sources of infection that may be slowly undermining health. How many thousand prescriptions have been written for mixtures to relieve dyspepsia, or cough, when a careful examination of the upper portion of the digestive or respiratory tracts would have revealed the most potent etiological factors in producing the disturbance. A young lady brought to her physician a large handful of prescriptions given for the relief of a spasmodic cough by men of repute. The detection and removal of a small septal spur rendered immediate and permanent relief. It might not be an easy task to prove that a diseased tonsil was the most potent factor in producing pulmonary or gastro-intestinal disturbance, or a mild form of general septicæmia, yet no one could question the undesirability of having a more or less continuous discharge from a septic focus in a submerged tonsil.

When a patient comes with a breath laden with the odor peculiar to septic material—a hyperæmic condition of faucial pharyngeal, or laryngeal structures, cough, or gastro-intestinal disturbance, the physician will quite often find himself well repaid, if with a good light, a retractor for the anterior pillars, and a probe he searches diligently for disease, especially in the crypts or lacunæ of a submerged or atrophied tonsil. The more deeply the tonsil is hidden out of sight the more suspicious the physician should be of its character, for like venereal disease the septic tonsil may be found in the most sequestered retreat. A young man came to his physician to seek relief from an attack of acute specific urethritis. He scornfully resented the imputation of having associated with anything "common or unclean," and asserted that his only amorous indulgences had been with one who was a most zealous church worker. and

* Post Graduate Clinic, Western Hospital.