

"Nervous Diseases" for any reference to it as a source of spinal irritation or reflex spasm.

Whatever many may say as to what is the normal relationship between the glans and prepuce in a young child, it is certain that in many instances we have the preputial opening contracted to little more than a pin-hole opening, while its mucous membrane is adherent to the glans to such an extent as to make the stripping of it off a matter of some little trouble. Apart from the point as to whether this condition would be provocative of irritation, we have as a result of it the retention of smegma, and even the formation therein of calcareous secretions, either or both of which is certain to create an irritability proportionate to the neurotic factor of the individual.

To appreciate fully what results may be the outcome of this source of irritation, we have to recollect what is meant by reflex action. We have in reflex action an afferent or sensory factor and an efferent or motor factor, with the "reflex centre," and have a cutaneous reflex action, and a "muscle reflex action," or "tendon reflexes." In cutaneous reflex action it is excited by stimulation of the skin, more readily by a gentle than by a violent impression. Such are the gluteal, cremasteric, plantar, etc., reflexes, varying with different persons in some degree. With a part more sensitive than any of those and an accumulating source of irritation, it is not strange that a mucous irritation—really a cutaneous irritation—may become the source of severe and increasing neurotic effects.

Some of the more notable effects which have been produced are referred to by Dr. Sayre. In one, as described by Prof. Gross, the gait of a child of ten years "simulated that of locomotor ataxia," being uncertain, precipitate, irregular and jerking. On the second day after removing a contracted and adherent prepuce the trouble had entirely disappeared." Another case related by Dr. A. R. Mott, Jun., was where very severe epileptoid seizures were completely and at once relieved by cutting a constricting band behind the corona.

Numerous other cases are recorded by Dr. Sayre, and we may add one or two more which have come under our own observation or care. Two years ago a lady patient gave birth to a large healthy boy. Within a few weeks attendance upon the child was requested as it was peevish, restless, crying almost constantly, at which time the con-

traction of the abdominal muscles caused the descent of a right inguinal hernia. Remembering to have noticed a reference to the relation between such hernias in children and contracted prepuce, examination was made and such found. Circumcision cured the child of peevishness and crying; it developed well and the hernia gradually disappeared. Again in a child fifteen months old, unusual irritability and difficulty in obtaining quiet sleep was immediately cured; the prepuce being stripped back with some force, during a period of rigidity. The child almost immediately went into a long and refreshing sleep and has continued to do so since. In another instance, frequent vesical irritability and an unnatural mental irascibility were overcome in a very short period, the child becoming sweet-tempered and affectionate.

Apart from the immediate pleasing results in the cases of children, the necessity for examining into this too frequent abnormal condition is seen in the permanent physical and mental affections which may result from a continuance of such a condition to manhood.

In the discussion of this subject at the Washington International Congress, Dr. F. Willard, of Philadelphia, stated that the enthusiastic advocacy of this operation has led rash and unthinking physicians to advise this operation when it was unnecessary, in cases where central nerve lesions existed. He looks upon subsequent cleanliness as the greatest safe-guard against all reflex irritations and their results. "If the profession will watch more carefully they will find many cases of apparently obscure mal-nutrition that can thus be easily explained," and in most cases we are fortunate in knowing that the trouble may generally be wholly overcome without so serious an operation as circumcision.

SMALL-POX OUTBREAKS.

IT is just three years since the whole northern part of the Continent along the great lakes was placed in a condition of general alarm and excitement, owing to the prevalence of an outbreak of this dreaded disease which had reached enormous proportions in the city of Montreal and suburbs. The recollections of this have not been forgotten, and during the past six weeks the presence of cases of this disease in Buffalo and several places in Canada has aroused the public to a realization