

Retrospect Department.

SURGERY.

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THE FINAL RESULTS IN THE X-RAY TREATMENT OF CANCER, INCLUDING SARCOMA.

Dr. Wm. B. Coley contributes an article on this subject in the *Annals of Surgery*, August, 1905.

He concludes that the results of the X-ray treatment of malignant tumours up to the present time have proven :

1. That the X-ray exerts a powerful influence upon cancer cells of all varieties, but most marked in cases of cutaneous cancer ;
2. In some cases, chiefly in superficial epithelioma, the entire tumour may disappear, probably by reason of fatty degeneration of the tumor cells with subsequent absorption ;

3. In a much smaller number of cases of deep seated tumors, chiefly cancer of the breast and glandular sarcoma, tumors have disappeared under prolonged X-ray treatment. In nearly every one of these cases, however, that has been carefully traced to final result there has been a local or general return of the disease within a few months to two years ;

4. In view of this practically constant tendency to early recurrence, furthermore, in the absence of any reported cases well beyond three years, the method should never be used except in inoperable cases, or as a prophylactic after operation, as a possible, though not yet proven, means of avoiding recurrence ;

5. The use of the X-ray as a pre-operative measure in other than cutaneous cancer is contra-indicated : 1st, because the agent has not yet been proven to be curative ; 2nd, because of serious risks of an extension of the disease to inaccessible glands or to other regions by metastasis during the period required for a trial of the X-ray.

These conclusions have been reached after a study of cases extending over the past three years. During this period he had under observation the X-ray treatment of one hundred and sixty-seven cases of malignant tumors, both carcinoma and sarcoma.

SCOPOLAMINE-MORPHINE ANÆSTHESIA.

The same number of the *Annals of Surgery* contains two articles on scopolamine-morphine anæsthesia.