

Progress of Medical Science.

MEDICINE.

IN CHARGE OF W. H. B. AIKINS, F. A. CLARKSON, AND BREFNEY
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Postural Lung Dullness.

Albert Abrams, in the *Medical Record* of April 3rd, 1909, describes what he designates "atelectatic zones" in the normal subject, which are demonstrated both by X-rays and percussion. They correspond roughly to the points of election of tubercular infections of the lungs, and are frequently present in "pulmonary anemia." In healthy persons, Abrams also describes "acute lung dilatation," a condition in which a hyperresonant note on percussion is obtained in the varial individual. It is essentially an emphysema; on applying a solution of cocaine to the nares both this and the atelectatic zones can be made to disappear, the dilatation fibres of the bronchioles being inhibited reflexly and the normal note substituted for hyperresonance, on the one hand, as, if in consequence of a nasal anomaly, the constrictor fibres are irritated, cocaine, by inhibiting this action, will transform dullness into resonance. The pretuberculous lung, according to the author, is essentially an emphysematous lung, is hyperresonant, and on deep inspiration no extension of its borders can be demonstrated, the author believes that as resonance is usually found in early phthisis, and that, as this resonance is in part due to the vibrations of the sternum, providing the osseous note can be eliminated (either by pressure of the hand on the lower sternum or by means of a vibro-suppressor, an instrument much like an old-fashioned tourniquet, provided with a pad and screw apparatus which can be adjusted over the sternum and tightened at will), dullness, say, of an apex can be elicited much earlier in the progress of the disease. The author also draws especial attention to the effect of posture (in the normal) on the percussion note, for example, on leaning forward the anterior zones of the thorax show a defective resonance, the reverse occurring on leaning far backwards, lying on one side, and leaning to one side. The recumbent posture will also yield characteristic changes on percussion. These alterations involve usually a large portion of lung, are markedly influenced by