

Selected Articles.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN ANY OPERATION.

If the medical profession (Gifford Knox, Westfield, N. J.) would spend more time in actual research and active discussion on how to avoid inflammatory conditions of the vermiform appendix, the caecum, and the contiguous territory, and some less in learned dissertations upon how to employ the knife successfully, the world would be benefited far more. That when the world at large wants to know is how to avoid operations, rather than how to do them. It is to be admitted as worthy of the most thorough-going consideration that the success that has attended the evacuation of abscesses located in the right iliac fossa has been remarkably gratifying; but surely this obscure and insidious disease should not be permitted to go on to the stage calling for such operative influence when daily attendance is the purpose of noting any such advance. The dread of opening the peritoneal cavity no longer holds the profession in docile fear. Brilliant achievements are done. It is becoming a happy rarity to have autopsies reveal conditions which might have been obviated by timely surgical interference. Mr. Bryant told me himself, more than nineteen years ago, that he advocated early interference. He said, "I do not think that because some cases recover without operative interference, we should forget that, if unrelieved, a large majority die miserably." Mr. Jacobson, one of the surgeons to Guy's Hospital, made me this remark, "I know," he said, "how fatal such operations have been, but I also know that very rarely a case gets well if left to itself." And leading American surgeons are not a whit less emphatic in urging operative measures. It is an easy operation, readily performed. The dangers are few, and the precautions are well reckoned. Some one has said, "It is done every day." True, and with the best of results in the majority of cases; but, I call for early diagnosis. And the disorders may go by either name, appendicitis or perityphilitis. It presents itself clinically in acute and chronic forms. In the chronic variety we have a pathological condition lying dormant, it may be, for years, but manifesting itself under special perturbations at irregular intervals. The changes