

the sound portion of the urethra receives under these circumstances. Notwithstanding the injunction, "Never use force in passing an instrument through the urethra," the organ is sometimes lacerated in the endeavor to get the sound to pass.

Then the longitudinal stretching does no good; and the round instrument which engages in a stricture develops so much friction by reason of the fact that every part of its circumference impinges on the point of greatest resistance in the stricture, that much force is lost, which, with a rectangular instrument of the same diameter, but presenting less friction surface, could be utilized in stretching the urethra laterally and so gliding through it.

I will not enumerate all the situations in which the round instrument is faulty and imperfect, nor will I say that these rectangular instruments can supersede the round ones entirely, but there are a few points of superiority which may be justly claimed for the rectangular instruments:

1. They present four points of contact with the stricture, therefore less friction than the round instrument.

2. They are grooved between the angles, and thereby insure the presence of the lubricating medium at the points where it will do most good.

3. They provide a mean for applying solvent medicaments to the stricture.

4. They stretch the urethra in its transverse diameter at the point where it is organically diseased or in a state of spasm.—[Wyman, *American Lancet*.

### THE STOMACH IN DIABETES.

The prominence of gastric symptoms in patients suffering from diabetes mellitus induced Prof. Rosentein (*Berlin. Klin. Wochenschr.*), to carry out observations into the relation of the gastric juice and stomach in ten cases. Of these, the contents of the stomach were normal in four, whilst there was some alteration in six. The results are summed up as follows: In a series of cases of diabetes free hydrochloric acid is absent from the gastric juice during a longer or shorter time, and this failure is to be looked upon as an expression of a neurosis of the stomach. In a number of cases there is extensive atrophy of the mucous membrane, in consequence of interstitial gastritis. Where the absence of free hydrochloric acid is permanent, atrophy of the glandular apparatus arising from interstitial inflammation is to be looked upon as the cause. The secretion-neurosis of the stomach, as well as failure of the knee-jerk and other neuroses met with in diabetes, do not stand in direct proportion to the gravity of the case in so far as it is measured by the amount of sugar, acetone, or diacetic acid.—*The Practitioner*.

### TREPHINING IN HEAD INJURIES.

Zeidler (*Amer. Journ. Med. Sciences*) says:

1. Symptoms of cerebral pressure following head injury, indicate trephining only when these symptoms point clearly to bleeding from the arteries of the dura.

2. Simple fractures of the skull, unaccompanied by symptoms of intracranial hæmorrhage, never indicate trephining.

3. Depression of the bone should not in itself be considered as an indication for trephining.

4. The object of primary trephining is asepsis, or the checking of hæmorrhage.

5. Secondary trephining is indicated in cases of beginning meningo-encephalitis.

6. Epileptoid attacks, due to the pressure of splinters of bone upon the brain, should be relieved by removing these splinters.

7. In treating fractures which involve a sinus, the bleeding from the latter should be checked by tamponade, and not by suture.

8. The term *débridement* should be applied to the operative procedures necessitated by a complicated fracture of the skull, trephining being reserved for the formal operation upon the uninjured bone.—*Lancet Clinic*.

### CHARCOAL WAFER BISCUITS.

These biscuits, as articles of food, are not, from the nature of the active ingredients which they contain, very attractive in appearance, but they possess a flavor by no means unpleasant. Indeed, it would be difficult to say from the taste alone that they contained charcoal at all. There is, too, no objectionable feeling of grittiness experienced during mastication. They are adapted for use in cases of excessive acidity of the stomach.—*London Lancet*.

### THE DIAGNOSIS OF CANCER.

Although the introduction of antiseptics and the progress made in our operative technique have greatly improved the prognosis of cancerous diseases, it must be confessed that our diagnostic means are still far from satisfactory. This is to be the more regretted, since an early diagnosis greatly enhances our chance of effecting a permanent cure in these cases. At the late Congress of the German Surgical Society, Professor Esmarch spoke of the uselessness of statistical studies in affording us information as to the etiology and diagnosis of cancerous diseases. He called attention to the fact that syphilitic tumors, especially of the tongue and throat, are not infrequently confounded with malignant growths, and proposed that the old term, "gumma," be abandoned, since these syphilomata—as he terms them—more often resemble in structure the fibromata and sarcomata. In fact, a large number of the sarcoma