

be easily explicable on the assumption that in certain patients the catarrh of the colon does not manifest itself continuously by the secretion of mucus but intermittently; the colon being unduly sensitive to special kinds of irritation, and therefore the elimination of mucus and its attendant colic is an occasional and not a constant phenomenon. I have as yet seen no case which fully coincides with the descriptions given of mucous colic, but I am inclined to accept the view of those writers who consider it simply a variety of "membranous colitis," and not a separate disease of nervous origin.

In all these four diseases an irritative condition of the colon, which is rightly called catarrhal, exists as a common factor, and the presence of this catarrhal irritability ought, in my opinion, to form the foundation of our clinical nomenclature—a name which embraces all the intermediate and atypical cases, as well as the others to which names have in the past been given.

ABNORMAL SECRETORY AND MOTOR ACTIVITY.

This catarrhal condition of the colon manifests itself by altered function of two kinds: (1) Abnormal secretory activity; (2) by abnormal motor activity. The secretory abnormality is of an ordinary catarrhal character, namely, an excessive production of mucus, and also probably a deficiency in the amount of the normal secretions leading to increased dryness of the feces and constipation in all except the very acute cases.

The mucus which characterizes these cases of colon catarrh is of a peculiarly firm and membranous character, and appears in the stools as cohesive membranes or masses, sometimes forming complete casts of portions of the bowels.

The abnormal motor activity shows itself either as irregular contractions leading to abdominal pain (sometime of an extremely severe and colicky character), and also very commonly of a peculiar form of tonic rigidity of the muscular coat, which leads to what I have spoken of as spasmodic dilatation of the bowel, and of which I have as yet been able to find no good description either in physiological textbooks or in ordinary medical literature. Of this symptom I shall speak more fully when discussing the symptomatology.

PATHOLOGY.

With regard to the pathology of colon catarrh. As the disease in any of its forms is not usually a fatal malady there have been very few opportunities of making necropsies. As I have