Medical Memoranda

Obstetrical Forceps for Fibroid

Grim stories have been told of doctors who in times past have applied forceps to fibroids in the belief that they were foetal heads. I am unaware of any record of a vaginal forceps application to a fibroid being deliberately performed, and as the manoeuvre has on two separate occasions in a relatively short time been of considerable assistance, I believe it may be useful to draw attention to the fact. There is also scope for the use of these instruments during myomectomy by the abdominal route.

CASE RECORD

A woman aged 52, with two children aged 23 and 8, was admitted as an emergency to the Radcliffe Infirmary on March 13, 1943. She was bleeding badly at the time of admission, was very anaemic, and gave a history of recurrent severe losses of progressive amount for the past year. Prior to this, menstruation had been regular, of the 5/28-day type, and the losses were moderate. For some months there had been progressive difficulty in micturition, with frequency and straining.

On admission the patient had a temperature of 99°, pulse 116, and respiration rate of 22. She was well nourished but very blanched. A firm mass could be felt in the midline, rising from the pelvis and apparently the size of a 14-weeks pregnancy. Vaginal examination

showed that this mass was a fibroid filling the pelvic cavity and projecting into the abdomen. The examining finger could not be passed above the tumour to identify the cervix, through which it was apparent the fibroid had been extruded. Transfusion was started and three pints of blood were given slowly. While the third pint was running, the patient, whose condition was now much improved, was taken to the theatre. The previous findings were confirmed, and after catheterization light obstetrical forceps (Wrigley pattern) were applied to the tumour. It was found that gentle traction did not produce any appreciable descent; the pedicle could not be reached, and it was therefore necessary to remove the tumour by torsion or morcellation. An episiotomy was performed and the forceps were gently rotated. The tumour twisted so easily that it was obvious torsion of the uterus could not be occurring, and with surprising ease the fibroid (see Fig.) separated at the base of its pedicle and was delivered. The uterus was small, no other fibroids were present, and there was practically no further haemorrhage and none from the pedicle. As no bleeding-point on the tumour was found it was obvious that the severe haemorrhages had been uterine in origin, but there was no endometrial hyperplasia. The probable cause was that by its position and size the fibroid was elevating the uterus, stretching the uterine vascular pedicle, and thus producing a state of severe chronic congestion.

I have seen a similar case of severe anaemia due to constant bleeding from a normal uterus elevated into the abdomen by a pelvis filled with chronic faecal accumulations. In both cases cessation of bleeding occurred when the two different congesting causes were removed, and in both cases menstruation has since been normal.

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The most effective and simple method of cleansing dairy equipment is by steam sterilization, but since any considerable extension of this method is impracticable at the present time, the Minister of Health (Circular 2819) has made new Regulations permitting the use of sodium hypochlorite solutions for this purpose. Approved solutions, a list of which is given in the circular, must have a total available chlorine content of between 9 and 12% w/w and not less than 0.7% of sodium chlorate to act as a "detector" should sodium hypochlorite solutions get into the milk. Copies of the Regulations can be obtained from the Stationery Office.

Reviews

ANATOMY OF MORALE

The Structure of Morale. By J. T. MacCurdy, Sc.D., M.D. (Pp. 224. 8s. 6d.) Cambridge: The University Press. 1943.

Dr. MacCurdy is a well-known authority on psychopathology, and this book should have a wide appeal at the present time, especially as it is lucid and refreshingly free from technicalities. Based on the same sound biological foundations as Rivers and Trotter, it will also appeal to students of the more objective sciences, some of whom are a little apt to look askance at the psychological approach. At the outset he reminds us that the emotional, as distinct from the rational, side of our lives belongs to the mind that we share with animals. This naturally leads on to a study of the conditioning and de-conditioning of reactions (which he prefers to the label of "reflexes"), and thence to a searching analysis of the nature of fear in the light of such information. Not merely are we all liable to fear, we are also prone to be afraid of being afraid, and the conquering of fear produces exhilaration. The Germans in their exploitation of terror had not studied sufficiently the ways in which people may adapt themselves to actual or threatened danger. They themselves had the worst of all possible preparations in having been assured that no enemy aeroplane could penetrate their defences. Behaviour in the face of danger rests on previous emotional adaptations to "signals" just as with Pavlov's dogs. Thus evacuation has increased neurosis, while sticking at the job has tended to reduce it; what is really terrifying about any danger is inability to cope with it. Anticipation of ordeals may lead by training to proficiency in facing them. When there is a deadlock between a striving to do something and an inhibition which keeps it in check, fear arises. This section ends with a discussion of panic fear.

The second section deals with the basis of morale, starting from Wilfred Trotter's distinction between the union of cells to form a new unit, the body, and the integration of individuals to form a herd. In the former the co-operation is physiological, in the latter psychological. With man the "herd voice" is not merely a signal for instinctive responses, it has evolved into a body of traditional group experience. For man, be he never so individual, can never escape his biological fate of being a herd animal. To this profound influence of tradition Dr. MacCurdy attributes the varying reactions of different nations under stress, attaching great importance to this as a factor in British morale. The German Empire and the kingdom of Italy, on the other hand, are but recent growths, and the effects of this on morale are skilfully dissected. He tactfully omits detailed discussion of French morale, and reserves his severest denunciation for that of Japan: "Humanity is not in their vocabulary . . . no cure for this cancer . . . except its extirpation." He concludes that the fundamental differentiation of democracy from the authoritarian States lies in its treatment of minorities.

Space prevents reference to the third section, on organization. Suffice it to say that this book is full of good things; it is interestingly written and, despite the gravity of the subject, entertaining.

ORTHOPAEDIC AND INDUSTRIAL SURGERY

The 1942 Year Book of Industrial and Orthopedic Surgery. (Pp. 424; illustrated. 19s.) Chicago: The Year Book Publishers.

This little volume gives a brief and pithy account of many interesting recent developments in orthopaedic and allied subjects. The editor is to be congratulated on his choice of material and the way in which it is presented. To the busy surgeon who finds it difficult to keep abreast with the large volume of literature which he should read to keep up to date such a book is invaluable. The subjects range from tuberculosis of bones and joints to all forms of fracture and dislocation, and bone tumours. A short concluding section deals with special problems of industrial medicine and surgery. The section on fractures of the neck of the femur, Volkmann's contracture, fractures of the patella, and fractures of the humerus are