

Abstracts.

DIPHTHERIA.

Champion, S. Gurney, and Vaughan, A. Ll.—*A Report on Forty-three Consecutive Cases of Diphtheria.* "Lancet," July 26, 1902.

The statistics of forty-three consecutive cases of diphtheria are published to show the value of tracheotomy and free administration of antitoxin in the treatment of this disease. The cases admitted were those suffering from laryngeal obstruction, and many of these were brought to hospital *in extremis*. In these circumstances it will readily be understood that thirty-nine out of the forty-three cases required operation. The total number of deaths was ten, out of which five cases—*i.e.*, one-half—were aged between one and two years, two between three and four years, while the total number of patients admitted at these ages was twelve and fourteen respectively, thus showing a mortality of 41 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. at the former age, and only 14 per cent. at the latter age. But of these forty-three cases, it will be seen that twenty-four, or rather more than one-half, had a laryngeal and pharyngeal infection, while fourteen had laryngeal infection alone, with a mortality in the former case of 16 per cent., and in the latter of nearly 50 per cent. It is, however, only fair to state that out of the six deaths occurring in the latter (laryngeal alone) variety, one was due to suppression of urine, two were due to broncho-pneumonia; while of the other three, two patients died from asphyxia, and one from hæmorrhage into the trachea, which was started during a fit of coughing within a few hours of the operation. Three cases which recovered had a laryngeal, pharyngeal, and nasal infection. All the patients who recovered were examined as late as three weeks after discharge from the hospital for signs of paralysis, and in three only were any present.

Statistics.—The total number of cases was forty-three. Tracheotomy was performed in thirty-nine cases, the result being that twenty-nine of the patients recovered and ten died (one child had ceased breathing before the operation had begun). Paralysis occurred in three cases; all recovered completely. One patient had a pharyngeal infection alone; no antitoxin was administered, and the paralysis occurred twenty-five days after the onset of the disease. One patient had a pharyngeal, laryngeal, and nasal infection; 17,000 units of antitoxin were injected, and paralysis occurred on the fifty-fourth day of the disease. In a third case the patient had pharyngeal and laryngeal infection; 6,000 units of antitoxin were administered, and paralysis occurred on the fifty-seventh day of the disease. Cultures taken in eighteen cases showed the following result: In five cases there was a pure culture of diphtheria; in six a mixed culture of diphtheria and staphylococci; and in seven pure cultures of staphylococci, or mixed staphylococci and streptococci.

StClair Thomson.